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THE

PEARL OF TROYES.



O Virgin pure! sweet treasure from above,  
List from thy bright throne to us below.  
Accept this humble tribute of my love,  
And let thy blessings on it freely flow;  
Receive my lowly prayer, my ardent sigh,  
Like thee, make me live, near thee, let me die.





*Imp. Des. J. B. Haudouville Paris.*

Massard del et sculp<sup>t</sup>

MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS,

Fondatrice des Sœurs de la Congrégation de Villemarie,  
née le 17 Avril 1620, décédée le 12 Janvier 1700.

MARGARET BOURGEOYS

Foundress of the Sisters of the Congregation at Villemarie (Montreal.)

Borne Apr<sup>l</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> 1620; died Jan<sup>y</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> 1700

THE  
PEARL OF TROYES,

— OR —

REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS

— OF —

VILLE-MARIE.

---

REVEALED TO US IN THE HEROIC LIFE

— OF —

SISTER MARGUERITE BOURGEOYS

FOUNDRESS AND FIRST SUPERIOR

— OF THE —

CONGREGATION OF NOTRE-DAME

*Established at Ville-Marie in the year 1653.*

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MONTREAL :

CANADA PRINTING COMPANY, 222 NOTRE-DAME STREET

1878



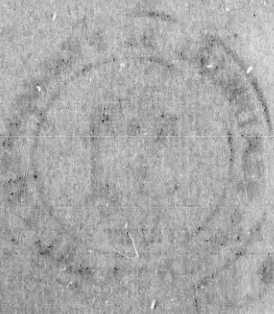
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Entered according to Act of the Parliament of Canada, in the year one thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight, by the Sisters of the CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME, Montreal, in the Minister of Agriculture, Ottawa.





Vû le rapport favorable de notre Théologal, sur le livre intitulé THE PEARL OF TROYES, or REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS OF VILLE-MARIE,

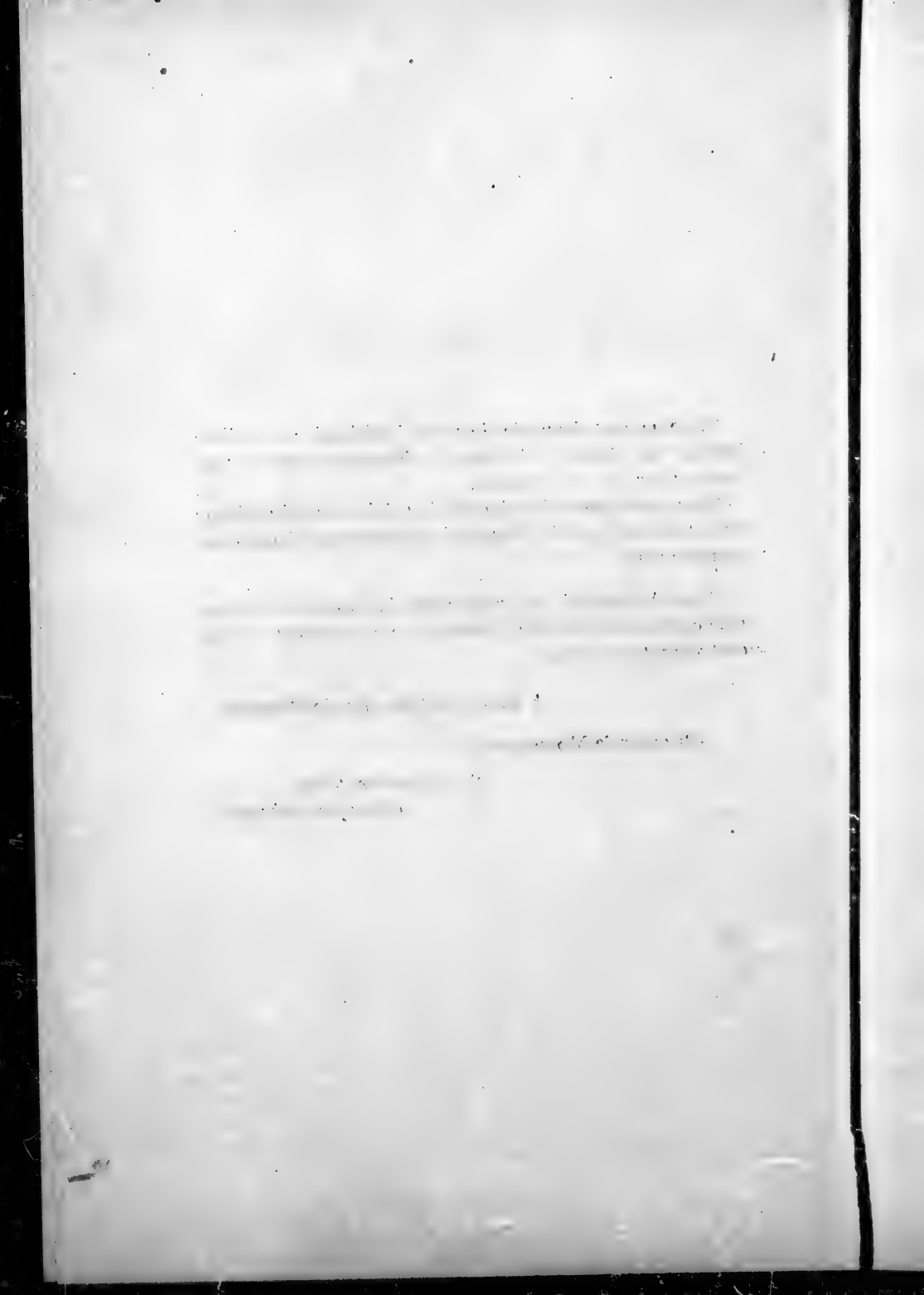
Nous approuvons très-volontiers la publication qui a été faite de cet ouvrage, par la Compagnie d'Imprimerie Canadienne, en notre ville.

Donné à Montréal, sous notre seing, le sceau de nos armes, et le contre-seing de notre Chancelier ce quinze Avril, mil huit cent soixante-et-dix-huit.

† EDOUARD CHS., Ev. de Montréal.

Par ordre de Monseigneur,

P. E. LUSSIER, Chan.,  
*Chancelier Episcopal.*



## DECLARATION.

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Conformably to the prescriptions of our holy Mother, the Catholic Church, we declare, that if in this little work, we have made use of terms, which the church usually bestows upon Saints. Such as the title of "Saint, Holy or Venerable," it is simply to conform to a custom, long since established among the faithful, who sometimes give these qualifications to persons of incontestable piety. We have not pretended to give any other signification to our words, and submit all that we have written, to the judgement of the Holy See.

## NOTIFICATION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the undersigned, being duly qualified, has been appointed by the Board of Directors of the [Name of Corporation] to act as its representative in the [Name of State] to [Purpose of Appointment].

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Board of Directors has caused this Certificate to be signed by its President and Secretary, and the Seal of the Corporation to be hereunto affixed, this [Date] day of [Month], [Year].

[Signature of President]  
[Signature of Secretary]

[Name of Corporation]  
[Address of Corporation]

## DEDICATION.

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To my Class mates of 185...., and to the many dear young friends, who have filled their vacant places, this book is most affectionately inscribed.

It is the writer's hope, that the perusal of this book will bring back many memories, linked with a happy past; that it will recall scenes of by-gone days, when all was joy and happiness, because all was under virtue's sway.

Years have passed in quick succession, since we clasped the kindly hand and said the word "good-bye," more quickly still have passed for some, the joys and anticipations of their expectant youth. Many a sparkling eye that once rejoiced our sight, has often perchance been bedimmed with tears, and the sunny smile of youth, buried perhaps beneath traces deep of sorrow. Woman's lot is on you, gentle friends:

" Her lot is on you, silent tears to weep,  
And patient smiles to wear, thro' sufferings hour,  
And sunless riches from affections deep,  
To pour on broken reeds, a wasted shower."

Scattered as the leaves of autumn, are the members of our once happy band. We meet them here and there, by the waysides of life; some quietly performing the stern avocations of every day's existence, sanctifying themselves, and those around

them, by the practice of those virtues acquired in yearly youth. Others, are treading a different path making their own "way of the cross," down in the deep silent anguish of their hearts; afflicted souls, for whom every rose has its thorns. Others again, are in a joyous security; they have listened to a still small voice, calling them away from earth's vain joys, from its unreciprocated affections. They are nestling now in the shade of His Tabernacle, to catch the soft whisper of His interior words; living for Him alone, and praying for the weal of those they loved and left.

It has been often said, that like unto our Divine Master, we have each our own peculiar mission to fulfil, and our lives upon earth, are to be the accomplishment of this mission. And 'tis for this, that before the years of our adolescence have disappeared, we see fall, one by one, the joys and hopes of youth; the nearest and the dearest ties of friendship are snapt asunder, for the hour of separation rings for all. Alas! who has not heard its doleful sounds! We go forth, according as we have been called, by different routes, to the great warfare of life, and we commence that combat which will finish, with our last earthly struggle. Formed to the practice of solid virtue, within the loved precincts of Margaret Bourgeoys' Congregation, we know what virtuous inculcations, we there received. How those dear recollections cluster around our heart and how often, amid the perils of life, and the dangers of our own inexperience, they come back to us, with that same mysterious charm, which first won our youthful sympathies. They come to us as messengers of the past, to arouse our latent energies, to restore to freshness and to beauty, our first devotion, and give it back to us with that unsullied fragrance, which rejoiced the heart of God, before we left forever the venerated shades of our convent home. The following pages, we trust, will perform the same loving duty. We send them forth confidently, notwithstanding their many imperfections, for we offer them, not to science, nor to fame, but rather to grateful hearts, who love to loiter around scenes of past delights; or who, weary at times of life's hard battle, long for a peaceful and refreshing reminiscence of hours

that were, for a ray from the golden "long ago." And if but one slumbering virtue be aroused; if but one pious resolution taken in childhood, at the foot of Mary's altar be renewed; if but one silvery echo, from the *Ora pro Nobis*, murmured at evening hour, steals over a troubled heart, and soothes its weariness; then, will these pages have accomplished their mission, and the events therein related, will console and make happy as "remembered joys."

They were, they are, they still shall be,

CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME,

*Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus,*

June 8th, 1877.





## PREFACE.

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More than two hundred years have passed away, since the events we are about to relate transpired. Time and its fitful changes, have obliterated many a record of bygone days, and cast a shade over some of the fairest features of the past. Still memory ever faithful to her own, clings to these fond recollections of other days. Even, were the power given, who would throw the veil of forgetfulness over scenes so dear, so holy. Who would refuse to lend a willing ear, to these soft whisperings of the past, as they come home to our hearts, replete with love's persuasiveness. Their sweet influence steals over us, like "Songs of the Olden time," and while they speak of woman's worth, her faith, her zeal, while they recount her noble deeds, her glorious acts, we feel that 'tis a privilege real and great, to practice woman's virtue, to accomplish woman's mission.

Peruse the sacred volume of Him who died,  
Her kiss betrayed not, nor her lips denied,  
And when the Apostles, left Him to his doom,  
She lingered around His silent Tomb.

Let us then recall 1653, with its throng of glorious recollections, its hallowed remembrances, its untold heroisms; or rather ascending the stream of time, let us steal from the bosom

of the past, a few of those fragrant flowers, whose rich perfumes were so unsparingly scattered, around the early days of Ville-Marie.

Canada, according to the historical records of the 17th century, possessed few native attractions. The warwhoop resounded almost continually throughout its forest wilds, the ferocious spirit of the different tribes who inhabited the soil, was seemingly ill-calculated to interest the stranger, or attract the traveller. Notwithstanding this, there were hearts in a far off land, that burned with love for these children of the forest ; hearts, that longed to burst asunder the dearest ties of earth, ties of home and kindred, to carry far over the waters, glad tidings of a Saviour's love.

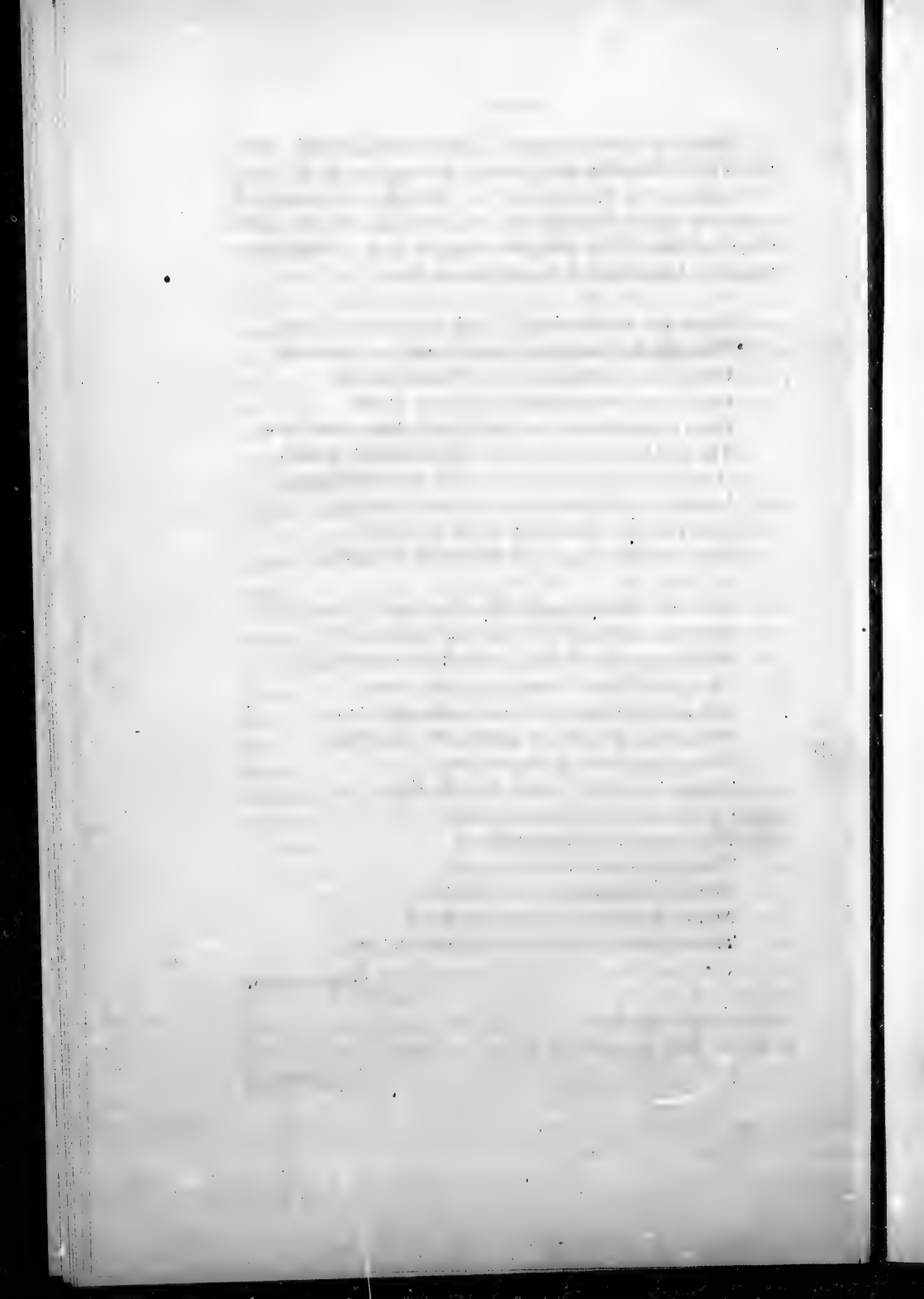
"O child of the red man ! there's magic in thy name, a charm hovers around thy destiny, else, why for thee, have earth's joys been cast aside, earth's riches spurned, earth's honors trampled under foot ? For thee, the noblest of earth's sons have given out, their life's blood freely, and who may enumerate the unsullied offerings, placed by youth and beauty for thee, upon the Altar of Sacrifice. Forget it not, the soil thou treadest is holy ground ; moistened by the blood of martyrs, hallowed and rendered dear, by the toils and privations of those, who brought to thee from afar, the gift of faith. Their names have been transmitted to posterity, and many a youthful cheek has glowed, and many an eye has flashed, at the recital of their deeds. Noble hearted missionaries of gentle birth and refined tastes, impelled by the instincts of their ardent charity, willingly exchanged their sunny clime and happy fire side, for the cheerless aspect of thy wild home. Men, whose lives on these western shores, were made up, of "fearless devotedness and heroic self-sacrifice," to thee, they came, untutored child of the forest, like the celestial messengers of old, bringing glad tidings of great joy, and winning by the soft influence of their persuasive words, of thy race the bravest, the noblest, the best. The proud spirit was curbed, the stiff neck bowed and received submissively the yoke of Jesus Christ.

"Thou wilt stand no longer," says a distinguished writer,  
"as a fallen forgotten race, among the nations of the earth,  
"Christianity has claimed thee; her privileges, her hopes, all  
"are now thine." Ages have passed, since that eventful morn,  
when first dawned for thee, the light of faith. History ever  
faithful to her mission, has told the tale, how,

"When o'er these plains, by birch and maple crowned,  
"The wild deer wandered, and the red man frowned.  
When the first glimpses of the morning broke,  
O'er vales of pine, and endless groves of oak.  
From whose green vistas, bright with flowers and dew,  
The wild bird sung, the wigwam glimmered through;  
How on yon green hill, the Indian warwhoop rung,  
In yon green dale the song of peace was sung;  
How rose at eve the pilgrims grateful song,  
And his deep prayers rolled forth the hills along.

The scene has changed. No more 'neath, forest wild,  
In joyous gambols, will the bright indian child  
Seek spring's first flowers, to deck the chieftain's hair,  
Or bathe his brow, in silent gladness there.  
Has gone, the warwhoop and the hunters cry,  
Hushed for aye, the red man's song of victory.  
'Tis past, and o'er his forest home,  
Towers the tall fabric and the lofty dome.  
On high, the hand of art has sent  
The column and the monument,  
To tell the triumph and the pride  
Of white men, who in battle died,  
And of their sons, to whom are given  
The treasures from the child of nature, riven.

(ANONYMOUS.)



# THE PEARL OF TROYES,

OR

## REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS

OF

### VILLE-MARIE.

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#### CHAPTER FIRST.

Reminiscences of the city of Troyes.—Persecutions in Gaul.—The north of France is ceded to the Normans, A. D. 912.—Rollo, chief of the Normans.—Thibault IV, Count of Champagne.—Margaret Bourgeoys, her birth and early childhood.—The youthful Apostle. Margaret loses her mother by death.—Congregation of Notre-Dame of Troyes.—The human heart.—Margaret yields to the call of grace.

“Blest land !  
There’s music in thy lightest gale.”  
(HEMANS.)

Among the many provinces of France, there is one around which our memory loves to linger ; not because nature has planted there some of her fairest bowers, not for its time honored name, nor for its luxuriant valleys and peaceful waters ; no, not for all these, but because Heaven blessed the land and decreed, that from that soil, should spring a precious flower, which transplanted in its first blooming to a foreign clime, should by its invigorating perfumes, give life and strength to many.

Dear reader, let us visit in fancy the quaint old city of Troyes, seated on the banks of the Seine, and while gazing upon her ancient walls, her ivied turrets and ruined towers,

while admiring the lofty spires of her majestic cathedrals, her noble piles of gothic structure, let us think of the scenes and events which have rendered this city remarkable. History, in describing this portion of Campania, tells us that it is rich in monumental and historical records, while its religious annals date to a remote period, even to the year 257, when flourished its first Bishop, Saint-Savinian. Catholicity was then in its primeval splendor, but the sunbeam is so often overshadowed by a cloud ! The sword of persecution was unsheathed in the Gallic provinces by the Roman Emperors, and multitudes of Christians moistened with their blood the land, whence in succeeding ages, God was to be glorified in His Saints, and the church enriched by the merits and relics of her holy martyrs. Troyes was not the last to brave the impending storm, and when the imperial edicts, proclaimed sacrifice or death, legions of her noble children, infant heroes and youthful virgins wended their way to the tyrants throne, gazing with scorn upon the idolatrous statue, and spurning with disdain the flattering offers of earthly joys. Attracted heavenward by Angel whispers, by celestial visions, they saw in the far off vista, eternal glories, which neither kingly magnificence, nor earthly power could ever bestow. In vain did the Emperors multiply their edicts, in vain did they increase their victims, none faltered.—It was amidst these scenes of bloodshed and cruelty that the Gospel achieved its most glorious conquests. Our holy Mother the Church raised her brow, and casting off the shackles with which persecution had bound her, she gazed triumphantly on the soil crimsoned with the blood of her fairest and best.

The Emperors turned their arms elsewhere, and once again Praise, Glory and Thanksgiving were offered to the Most High. An interval of peace—but before a century had elapsed, new invasions threatened the entire destruction of Troyes. About the year 451, Attila, King of the Huns, and leader of an immense multitude of barbarians, penetrated into the very heart of Gaul, plundering all the towns in his way. Meeting with a vigorous resistance, before the walls of Orleans, he was forced



to retreat towards the Rhine, closely pursued by General Aetius, whose valor obtained for him the surname of "The last of the Romans." Attila was overtaken in the vast plains of Châlons, in Champagne, while bent upon the destruction of Troyes. The inhabitants were thrown into the deepest consternation when their holy Bishop, Saint-Loup, raised their drooping spirits and assured them that their homes and their altars would be preserved from plunder and sacrilege. Our readers, familiar with the historical events of the time, remember with what awe the proud Attila listened to the holy Bishop's pleadings, and how, finally conquered by his resistless eloquence, he commanded his troops to leave the city unmolested.

Less fortunate at a later period, Troyes was doomed to ravage and destruction during the invasion of the Normans, A. D. 889. The conquest of France had long been the ambition of these fierce men of the North; repulsed with great loss from the walls of Paris, A. D. 886, they persevered in their course of piracy under the leadership of Rollo, one of the greatest warriors of the age. At length, King Charles the Simple consented to give up to them on condition of vassalage, the north of France, which became their permanent property A. D. 912, and took from them the name of Normandy. Rollo, distinguished as a conqueror, became still more so as a Legislator. Converted to Christianity, he rebuilt the churches and sanctuaries which had been devastated by incessant wars; his wise regulations, animated by a spirit of religion, changed the nature and the habits of a people, hitherto given up to a life of piracy. Under his judicious administration, Normandy became prosperous and flourishing, at a time when the rest of France was plunged into all the horrors of civil war; a time, when the clash of arms was heard on every side, and scenes of bloodshed and cruelty stained the fairest provinces in the land. Troyes was not more fortunate than the other cities of France. All fell victim to these disasters, and many a stately ruin, told a thrilling tale of fallen thrones and tottering dynasties. Industrial pursuits were nearly abandoned, or at most presented a dreary aspect until about the 12th century, when Thibault

IV, Count of Champagne (1), gave a stimulant to commerce and to manufactures, and Troyes soon took a distinguished rank among the prominent cities of Europe. Rich in remembrances, Troyes has ever been the cradle of the great and the good. She gave to the Church, with Pope Urbain the IV, many holy Bishops, zealous Priests, and a multitude of Saints of every age and condition. We may well say in the words of a poet :

"This ancient soil hath nursed a glorious race."

To the nation, she gave counsellors, heroes and statesman, poets and artists, who sang the praises of their native city, and paid their tributes to her holy shrines and antiquated altars. Blest and blessing in her influence, Troyes extended her munificence, far and wide, and nations, far beyond the well-loved shores of France, learned to cherish her memory.

To the Church of the New World, to the children of this western clime, she gave a pearl, torn from her own bosom ; its brilliancy penetrated the deep shades of the Canadian forests, and thousands, lured by its radiance, left there the wild deer, the bow and arrow, for a ray of its mellow light. A new city sprang up, 'neath its vivifying influence, and Ville-Marie turned, with grateful love, to that land which had been to her a source of untold blessings. Many a laurel wreath has fame, glory and renown, placed upon the hoary brow of Troyes, but none fairer, none brighter, none more glorious, than that won by her heroic and sainted daughter, Margaret Bourgeoys, whose virtues gave consolation to the Church of this western land,

(1) Thibault IV, Count of Champagne, was a most Christian Prince. After a life spent in the practice of every virtue, he was doomed to become the victim of many vicissitudes in his old age. His vassals, emboldened by his misfortunes, rose up against him. Abandoned by his allies, without arms and without defense, he had recourse in his distress to Saint-Bernard, his spiritual director, trusting that he would find in his counsels and friendship strength to bear his heavy crosses. He was not deceived. The holy abbot of Clairvaux responded to his call, and not only consoled him in his afflictions, but even reconciled him with his bitterest enemy, the King of France. And so perfect was this reconciliation, that when Louis the VII lost his second wife, Thibault's daughter, Alix de Champagne became his Queen. From this marriage was born Philip-Augustus, who succeeded him to the throne.

more than two hundred years ago. Let us turn back, dear reader, to April the 17th, 1620, when this favored child of grace first drew the breath of life. It was "Good Friday," and notwithstanding the peculiar shade of sadness, which ever accompanies this feast, there was joy and gladness, within the family circle of Abraham Bourgeoys, an honest merchant of the city of Troyes. Heaven had again blessed his union with Guillemette Garnier, by the birth of a daughter, known later as Sister Bourgeoys, the illustrious foundress of the Congregation of Notre-Dame. Angels flitted to and fro, around the crib of that new born babe, upon whose brow the regenerating waters had flowed. No pomp of heraldry, no crest of arms, glittered around that infant form, for neither Abraham Bourgeoys, nor his wife, were of princely lineage. Still, they held a considerable rank among their fellow citizens, while their truly Christian spirit, their virtues, and their moral worth rendered them influential in the circle of their acquaintances. They enjoyed a happiness unknown to the votaries of earthly splendors, and the treasure of a name unstained was the most precious inheritance they would leave to the five children who were growing around them. X

To the education of their youthful family they paid the greatest attention, remembering that "if there are many harvests in life, there is but one seed time." Their solicitude was amply repaid by Margaret, who evinced rare dispositions for learning and virtue from her earliest years.

Nature and grace had vied with each other, in bestowing their most precious gifts upon this child of benediction. To a strong maturity of intellect, were added many endearing qualities, which shed sunshine around her path, while her virtuous inclinations won for her the praise and the esteem of all.

She was, in truth, a lovely child, upon whose fair brow the smile of Heaven seemed to rest. At the age of ten, Margaret began to lay aside the toys and plays of youth; and assumed as if by inspiration, amusements of a graver cast.

Strong indications of her marvellous vocation were manifested even in her childish actions. Impelled by some myste

rious instinct, she evinced a strange predilection for the most virtuous and confiding among her little playmates, and with a zeal and fervor, remarkable in one so young, she gathered them together in some shady nook, or solitary spot, and there, unseen, she taught them in her own childish way, how to raise upwards their innocent hearts, and learn to love heavenly things.

These golden dreams of childhood were not évanescent. They lingered ever in her memory, and later, when seventy-eight winters had heaped their snows upon her head, she loved to recall these heavenly allurements, which had first drawn her soul to God. "When I was a child," she writes at this advanced age, "my greatest pleasure was to assemble little girls of my own age, in some secluded spot, and in our own way we formed plans for the future, and resolved to live piously together, and sanctify our daily actions by the love of God. At this time, I had never seen a religious community, but had merely observed a few young persons who lived together in the practice of good works."

It was most probably at this period that Margaret partook for the first time of the "Bread of Angels," and these primitive reunions of the youthful Apostle, were perhaps the best preparation for so important a duty—for, in giving a stimulant to the pious inclinations of her young companions, she increased thereby the purity and fervor of her own. Years <sup>passed</sup> ~~spend~~ on, but hardly had the child entered upon her girlhood, when a shadow of death fell upon the family circle, and Margaret was motherless.

A light was quenched. A voice hushed forever. New duties were now to claim her care. A holier mission awaited her youthful energies. The greater part of Mr. Bourgeoys' time was absorbed by his commercial pursuits consequently, but little could be devoted to his two younger children; still, feeling that it was for him an imperious duty to watch over and guide their growing years, and convinced that the mind of childhood, like the young plant, may be inclined to habits which will last through life, he finally decided upon giving this double respon-

sibility to his daughter Margaret ; he felt that notwithstanding her youth, she was competent for the task, and a father, he was justly proud of her rare prudence, her sound judgment and solid piety. Years rolled on, and as Margaret advanced in age, the precious qualities of her unfolding mind, shed joy and happiness around the family fireside. Another sphere had been opened to her youthful zeal, and the varying circumstances of her new position were willed by that Divine Providence, who led her, even at this early age, to the final accomplishment of her destiny.

A veil of secrecy hangs over the good she achieved during this period. No allusion was made by the holy sister in her memoirs, to the result of her youthful efforts. No exclamations of joy, because God had blessed her sisterly endeavors, not the slightest word, by which we might imagine, she had known a smile of triumph or an expression of discouragement. Silence and humility conspicuous, even at this early age. She only refers to this period of her life, when prompted by this same spirit of humility and reproaches herself more than once, because of a certain fondness for dress, and a desire to please by her becoming attire ; her dress was ever in accordance with the strictest rules of modesty, but was, nevertheless, of a style to prevent her from appearing inferior to other young persons of her age and condition. But might not these expressions be considered as proofs of those special favors, which God showered upon her from her very childhood ? Delicacy of conscience, mark certain of a chosen soul, destined to attain the summit of perfection, a grace, most frequently the fruit of many continued combats of a long inward struggle.

There existed about this time, in the city of Troyes, a fervent religious community, known as the "Congregation of Notre Dame," founded by a holy Priest, from that part of France called "Lorraine," his name "Father Fourier." These religious devoted to the instruction of youth, were cloistered ; but, attached to their institution, was a pious association of young persons, who, without contracting any solemn engagement, assembled on Sundays and Holidays to perform together certain

religious exercises and excite each other to the practice of virtue by their mutual good examples. The members of the sodality had long admired and loved the youthful Margaret. All were desirous of seeing her in their ranks, persuaded that her pious examples would induce others to join them. The young girl, too, wished to become a member of their Society. The sweet dream had long haunted her memory, but she resisted the inspirations it brought, for she felt that deep down within her heart, there was a lurking sentiment of vanity, a certain self-seeking in her attire, incompatible with the austere simplicity which the members of the association were obliged to profess. She hesitated. Poor human heart ! who has not known thy hesitations, thy incessant waverings, thy perpetual contradictions ! Like this material world, thou hast thy successive changes. Poor human heart ! power and mystery are thine ! It is down in thy mysterious depths, that memory holds her annals, 'tis there that she tells of the happy days of childhood, or sighs perchance, because of the shadows that came upon later years. Ah ! human heart, down in thy recesses deep, are mines richer than those of Golconda, gems more precious far, than pearls of eastern lands. Thou hast virtues slumbering there, until the hour of grace, shall call them forth to action ; thou hast fountains of human kindness, that require but to be unsealed and cast forth their refreshing waters, upon the bruised reeds and withered flowers, strewn over the paths of life. Restless as the foaming wave, and calm as the dewdrop in its rosy bower, thou art all powerful in thy workings. And yet, with all these hidden treasures, with thy noble instincts, with thy lofty aspirations for the pure and beautiful, with thy undeniable claim upon heavenly things, thou art earthly, and like the frail things of earth, thou hast miseries that humble thee, passions, whose baneful influence enslave thee. Vile things of dust can weave around thee their web of fascination, a feeble human tie can crush thy power, and drag thee to a level, with the basest menial.

Is this thy destiny, human heart ? wast thou born for earth, that thou leanest ever downwards ? Ah, no ! the precious

gifts with which thou art endowed, thy unutterable longings for unknown joys, even thy irresolution and thy resistance, all tell thee, that the desired goal, is not here below. Thine is a warfare, thou art an arena, where thoughts of Heaven, and thoughts of earth must meet in deadly strife—well may the poet say :—

“There is an unseen battle field,  
In every human heart,  
Where two contending forces meet,  
And where they seldom part.”

Our youthful Margaret was a convincing proof of these inward struggles. Her heart, adorned with the most precious gifts, yearned for the pure joys of Heaven, but the world had spread before her its delusive veil, and thus she wavered, poor bird in a gilded cage, refusing the liberty for which she sighed. But the hour advances, the designs of Heaven must not be frustrated. Grace is given. One generous determination, and the Rubicon is passed. There are similar traits in every day-life. We can find them perhaps, amid our own individual records. Grace has been calling for a long, long time, it still calls, and ever finds us lingering. We cling, perchance, to ruins that may never be restored, to wrecked hopes, for which there will never be any earthly realization. The hour advances. One generous determination. The gain is ours.



## CHAPTER SECOND.

Our Lady of the Rosary, or the triumph of grace.—The old Abbey and our Lady of Nonnains.—A voice from Heaven.—Margaret Bourgeoys love for Mary.—She becomes a member of the external Congregation.—Happy results of her examples.—Sister Bourgeoys desires to join the Carmelite Order is not received.—She turns to the Monastery of Saint Clare, where the same humiliation awaits her.—Margaret Bourgeoys twelve years Prefect of the External Congregation.—Jesus in the Sacred Host.

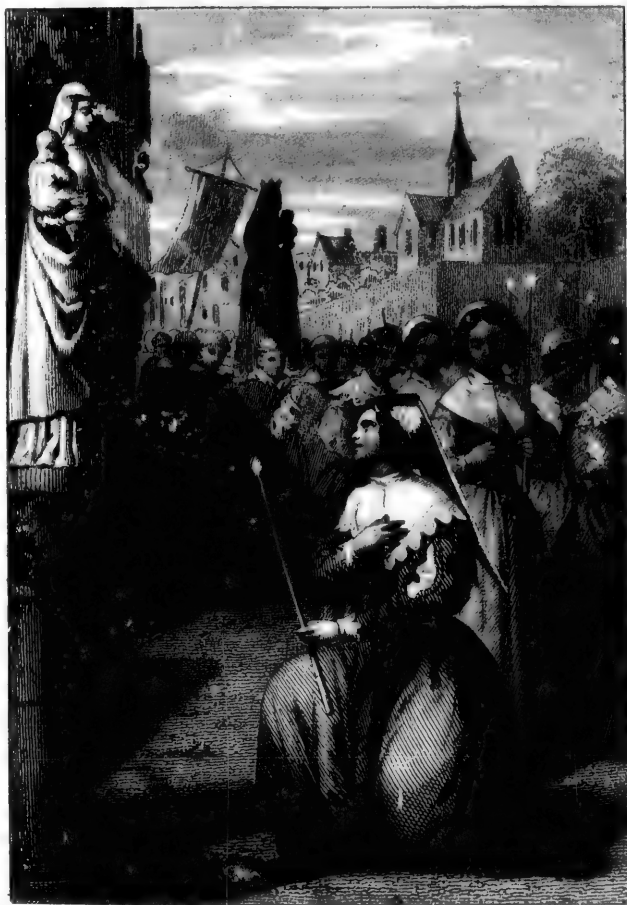
"A sense of deep repose has lulled me off,  
To peace, which is forgetfulness. I mean  
The vesper bell.

(HEMANS.)

It was the first Sunday of October 1640, the festival of Our Lady of the Rosary, a day dear to all the children of the Church, but peculiarly so, to the sons of Saint Dominic, who generally display great pomp in its celebration.

The glories of a bright autumnal day appeared in all their varied splendors. Nature vied with art, to enhance the beauties of a mother's feast day. The sun's rays played upon tower and steeple, and danced upon the rippling waters of the Seine. No sound was heard, save the chiming of the bells, as from their gothic spires they called the faithful to the house of prayer.

Margaret obeyed the summons, directing her steps towards the convent of the Dominicans, she reached the spot just as the solemn procession, which takes place on this day, was defiling through the huge portal of the monastery. Led on by devotion, or perhaps inspiration, she joined the pious throng. Not far distant, stood an ancient Abbey, known as "Notre-Dame aux Nonnains," the principal arch of which was adorned by a large stone statue, representing the Mother of God. As the procession moved on before the monastery, Margaret's eyes fell upon the image, which at this moment, appeared to her of unearthly beauty. Many a time in childhood had she gazed with love and reverence upon the heavenly figure, and per-



Imp. Dime, Su. r. Roussignolle, Paris.

Massard del et sculpt.

*A la vue d'une statue de Marie, la sœur Bourgeoys sent son cœur  
changé tout-à-coup, et se dévoue au service de cette divine mère*

*At the sight of this statue, Sister Bourgeoys's heart is suddenly  
changed. She devotes herself entirely to the service of her  
heavenly mother.*



chance many an act of filial love had gone up from her young heart to the Queen of Heaven, but never had its sight produced emotions similar to those she now experienced. She fell like one entranced at the feet of her Virgin Mother, a flood of interior light inundated her soul, and revealed to her in a single instant, the littleness of all things earthly. At the same time, the fire of divine love was enkindled within her, and filled with the latent energy that inspires great actions, she bowed submission to conquering grace, and vowed that no terrestrial object should ever come between her and her God. "In a word," she writes, "this moment of grace, wrought such a deep change within me, that I felt I was no longer the same person."

Reflecting later upon this extraordinary favor, which was to exercise so great an influence upon her future years, Margaret felt that the heavenly grace came not without design, her love and gratitude were strengthened at its remembrance, and the effects of its magic power were manifested even in her outward appearance. Her person, her actions, all within and all without partook of the divine impulse. A spirit of angelic modesty, of meekness, of humility, evinced that she was now, more than ever, the well loved child of that heavenly Mother, whom she was to love so tenderly and to imitate so perfectly. The remarkable and sudden change, which had taken place in Margaret's exterior conduct, struck her friends and acquaintances with surprise.

"After this favor," she writes, "I returned home, but so changed that it was visible to all, something unusual had occurred, for up to this time I had been extremely worldly and fond of gay attire and gay society."

Margaret had now attained her twentieth year. An age perhaps when the heart is most strongly bound to the pleasures and deceitful charms of life. But, for her, the hour of sacrifice had come, and she stepped forward in the path of renunciation, without casting a farewell glance upon things she had loved so well. Courted and esteemed by all, because of her sweet happy disposition, she stifled the tender feelings which love

had placed within her heart, and snapt asunder, the growing sympathies that had twined their tendrils around its memories.

At the same time, she laid aside all vain and useless ornaments, wore neither gold, nor silver, and appeared ever afterwards in an attire extremely simple, of a black or brownish shade. She wept unceasingly over her youthful follies, imperfections which her humility greatly exaggerated, but which nevertheless, were an obstacle to the designs of God upon her soul. What matter that the warbler of the forest is retained by a cord or by a silken thread. The chain, though slender, keeps him captive, and he can only look out upon the expanse through which he was to wing his flight :

So the immortal soul  
Destined to soar on high,  
Is oft times bound to earth,  
By a weak and feeble tie.

Margaret's next step was to cast herself at the feet of her spiritual adviser, and there deplore the failings and the imperfections of her past life, and to strengthen the better her pious resolutions, she resolved to join the Confraternity attached to the Congregation of Notre-Dame. Before doing so, however, she examined prudently the spirit of the association, and finding it in accordance with her own inclinations, she finally begged to be admitted among its members.

Her request caused joy, and created satisfaction among the fervent children of Mary, and before many weeks had elapsed, they perceived that their new companion surpassed them all in virtue and piety. We read in the annals of the society that : "There was a look of sanctity about her which inspired respect, while her simplicity and affability won for her the esteem of all."

It was about this time that her companions, through respect for her virtue, gave her the name of Sister Margaret.

Penetrated with zeal for the promotion of God's glory, she labored unceasingly to establish the reign of Jesus-Christ within all hearts. Her entire days were spent in administering to the wants of the needy and afflicted, and many a weary existence

learned to sanctify its sufferings, and raise its drooping spirits towards that God "who chastens because He loves." She excelled particularly in instructing the ignorant, and this occupation was ennobled by a spirit of faith, which clearly proved that some higher aim than personal satisfaction led her on. The most prominent trait, however, in her character at this period, was the deep love she bore the Blessed Virgin; her whole being seemed animated by this feeling, which grew and strengthened until her latest breath. And when, years later, she crossed the stormy deep, to erect in a far off land a monument to learning and piety, the love of Mary was her shield, her compass, her greatest consolation. And when trials and contradictions of every kind had ceased their vain endeavors, and success followed her hours of toil, the most precious inheritance which she transmitted to her spiritual children, was without doubt, her life giving devotion to the Mother of God. The ascendancy which Margaret had exercised in her youth over her childish companions, she still maintained among the children of Mary. She induced all to imitate those virtues which they so much admired in her, and convinced them by her examples, that in reality there is nothing so engaging, so cheerful and so amiable as piety.

Some months after her reception among the children of Mary, she was unanimously chosen to fill the office of Prefect or President, a position she occupied for the space of twelve years, that is, until her departure for Canada.

Something more than ordinary virtue must have led to such a result. To be retained in office for so long a period, is something unusual in a sodality, and great must have been the influence which Margaret Bourgeoys exercised so constantly and so happily upon the members of her association.

Similar to the many confraternities that rejoice the church in our day, it was composed of young persons who had not as yet embraced any particular state of life, and who, notwithstanding their pious inclinations and many charming qualities, were no doubt prone to the defects, which are so often attributed to the young: inconstancy and a love of independance.

To have remained so long under the direction of one of their own age, speaks most advantageously of all, and gives us an excellent idea of Sister Margaret's virtue, during the twelve years of their mutual intercourse. Character, we know is the moral part of our being, its influence is incontestable, and oftentimes, we fall victim to its laws. No doubt, the secret of Sister Margaret's success, came from her knowledge and experience in this matter, as well as from her interior union with the Mother of God, and her constant study of the spirit, which animated this heavenly Mother's actions. "To favor the harmony of hearts" says a distinguished writer, "always study the weak side of those with whom you live, so as to come in contact with it as seldom as possible." He adds. "Oh ! if we only knew the power of a smile, a word, a simple glance, nay, the slightest shade of expression, how often we would make others feel their magic influence." May we not infer then, from the affection evinced by Sister Margaret's companions during this length of time, that such had been her line of conduct ? When we view the result of her relations with others, we cannot but feel convinced that she had most beautifully delineated in her daily acts, every tint and shade of that divine charity, which should be the special ornament of a child of Mary : delicacy in thought, word, and action, so as to live in peace with others, to screen their little failings, to calm the ruffled brow, and meet with the frank open smile of a heart at ease, those, who but a moment before, had wounded our inmost feelings.

Sister Margaret as she advanced in years, felt the necessity of a spiritual guide, whose counsels and admonitions, might spur her on in the path of virtue. After directing many fervent prayers to this end, her choice fell upon Mr. Jendret, an ecclesiastic of uncommon prudence, and thoroughly imbued with God's holy spirit. He was at this time, chaplain of the Carmelites and when, still in the beginning of his relations with his new penitent, he remarked with pleasure the solidity of that virtue, the theme of every tongue. He saw at once that she had long been familiar, with the heroisms of abnegation, and that her natural inclination led her to the practices of an aus-



tere and penitential life. From this he concluded, that she was not called upon to live in the world. As he took a lively interest in every thing connected with the Carmelite Order, whose reform had produced about this time so extraordinary a sensation throughout all France, he was desirous of enriching this institution with so precious a subject. After having tried her vocation sufficiently, he made the proposition to his penitent. The respect and obedience which Sister Margaret ever entertained for those who represented to her the will of God, and then, the austere and penitential life led by the Carmelites, was too conformable to her own inclination to admit of a refusal; she felt within herself a strong desire to consecrate her entire being to God, she hastened therefore to communicate this project to her father. The venerable old man was thunder-struck at his daughter's demand. He had ever looked upon her as the hope and consolation of his declining years, and now. After the first emotions of grief had subsided, this worthy father of his noble child, gathered up his blighted hopes, and placed them generously upon the Altar of sacrifice. He consented that she should leave him, and promised to do all in his power to assist her, to give her the dowry exacted by the Carmelites, from those who joined their Order. Extremely moved at her father's deep affliction, Margaret stifled her own sad emotions, and, some days later, wended her steps towards the Carmelite Convent, and there she humbly begged to be admitted. God willed it not, the nuns, from some unknown motive, gave her no encouragement. We cannot imagine what could have induced them to refuse her. A person universally loved and respected because of her virtuous and exemplary conduct, Mr. Jendret's special recommendation, should humanly speaking, have disposed the nuns in her favor. We may infer from subsequent events, that God himself, had placed obstacles there, for His ways are incomprehensible to man. *Father*

Margaret withdrew, but not the least disheartened. She prayed with renewed fervor, and feeling that the doors of Mount Carmel were closed upon her, with her directors consent, she turned towards the Order of Saint Clare.

Fruitless attempt ! God did not call her there, she retreated a second time, but this double humiliation did not cause her fervor to relent. Reflecting upon these vain efforts, which seemed to strengthen her pious resolutions, Margaret determined to realize 'mid the tumult of the world, what she could not effect in religion. She implored in consequence her Director, to allow her to consecrate herself irrevocably to God by the vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. <sup>Mr. Jendret</sup> Mr. Jendret was convinced of Sister Margaret's virtue, still, he withheld his consent for the moment, and commanded her to banish the idea from her mind until her thirtieth year. She was at this time twenty-two and submitted without a murmur to the will of her Director, who soon after, moved by her fervor and humility, gave her permission to consecrate herself to God, by the vow of virginity. This holy action performed on the 21st of December 1643, feast of Saint-Thomas, was not sufficient for her loving heart, and wishing to disengage herself more perfectly from the vanities and desires of life, she soon after added to this first solemn promise, a second, that of poverty. From this moment until her latest breath, she considered these two favors among the most precious she had ever received, and alluding to this event some time before her death, she says : " I gave myself entirely to God in my twentieth year, 1640. Some time afterwards, I made with my confessor's consent, a vow of perpetual chastity, intending to add the two others, as soon as I could obtain permission. This favor was granted me some time later, and when I vowed holy poverty my resolve was to practice these virtues all my life." In this manner Margaret rendered herself more and more worthy the glorious mission, to which she was soon to be called. The little success encountered in her resolution to embrace the religious life, neither weakened nor diminished <sup>Mr. Jendret's</sup> Mr. Jendret's conviction, that she was called to a high state of perfection. He had often witnessed the effects of her zeal ; and the talents with which she was endowed, led him to think that perhaps she was called upon to found an institution herself, consequently he resolved to test the inspiration ; prayers

and sacrifices were offered up in this intention until the moment came to realize this idea. The matter was recommended to the ecclesiastical authority of Troyes. *Mr. Father* Jendret's views, met with the desired approbation and certain rules were compiled for the projected community. Two virtuous young women were associated to Sister Margaret, and shortly after all three entered upon their new duties, and gave themselves up to the instruction of youth with ardor and zeal. Sister Margaret in particular, devoted herself heroically to these daily duties.

One day while engaged in her occupations, she heard that two dissolute men had seized a young girl in the neighborhood, and were dragging her away, despite her tears and entreaties. Sister Margaret seized her crucifix and ran quickly like one inspired in pursuit. Braving all danger, she advanced, and holding up before their eyes the image of the crucified, she exclaimed: "Forbear! miserable wretches! It is Jesus-Christ himself whom you outrage in his members. Know, that sooner or later, He will avenge your temerity." Terrified, they withdrew covered with shame and left their victim at liberty. This young girl destined by Heaven to become one of Sister Bourgeoys' first companions in Canada, burst into tears of gratitude for this timely assistance, and threw herself with effusion of heart into the arms of her Benefactress. Many other traits might perhaps be given of Sister Bourgeoys' zeal in saving souls from the brink of ruin; her knowledge of the offences committed against that God she so much loved, inspired her with a burning zeal, and like a faithful sentinel, she was ever on the watch, lest even one poor soul should be devoured by the "Roaring lion, who goeth about seeking whom he may devour." Her new position gave her ample opportunities for doing good, but still it did not seem that God's will was perfectly manifested, and notwithstanding Mr. Jendret's wise precautions his plans failed. It was not in accordance with the will of Heaven, that the projected establishment should subsist in the city of Troyes. Its realization was reserved for Canada, and this failure did not, in any

way, disturb Sister Margaret's peace of mind. Her spirit of faith led her to see God's omnipotent will, presiding over the different events and circumstances of her life, and no matter, what the result of her undertakings might be, she was contented, provided that God was glorified by her endeavors. Thus disposed she was called upon to taste a bitter chalice. Her venerable father had reached the close of his earthly pilgrimage, stifling the sad emotions of her heart, she stood at his bedside like an angel of peace and mercy, sent to comfort the last moments of existence. And when the last struggle warned her that the soul had quitted its tenement of clay, strong, even, in this hour of grief, she closed with her own hands the eyes that had ever beamed upon her with tenderness and love. And when the last solemn office had been performed and to the inanimate remains had been given that last of all earthly gifts, a grave; when all that filial love prompted, had been accomplished, Sister Margaret retired to the house of her friend, *Mrs. Chuly* ~~Madam de Chuly~~ and resumed her ordinary occupations, until her departure for Canada, which took place some time after.

If the varying circumstances, of the last few months, had been for Sister Margaret a painful ordeal, they had also served to wean her affections entirely from earth, and shed a greater lustre upon her virtuous life.

The humble submission, with which she turned towards God, in her hour of trial, had drawn her nearer to Heaven, and she was now to refresh her weary soul at the well-spring of its living waters. For several months, her soul was inundated by a torrent of ineffable delights and when prostrate before the Altar to partake of the "Bread of Angels," she sank' neath the irresistible pressure of divine love.

More tranquil than the stillness of the night  
More peaceful than the stillness of that hour,  
More blest than any thing, my spirit lies;  
O God! beneath Thy power.

For what is there on earth that I desire.  
What can it give or take from me.  
Or whom in Heaven, doth my spirit seek  
O God! but Thee?

The most precious of these celestial favors, was that of a sensible apparition of Our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. It was the festival of Our Blessed Lady's glorious Assumption, the chosen feast of the external Congregation. It was customary on this day to expose the Blessed Sacrament in the little chapel, adjoining the convent of the Congregation during the procession which takes place in honor of the Mother of God. Margaret was chosen to perform the hour of adoration. Happier than if she had all the pleasures and riches of earth at her disposal, she took her accustomed place before the Altar. It would seem as if Our Lord was desirous of binding Sister Margaret, by every possible means, more and more intimately to His heavenly Mother, for it was always on some one of her festivals, that He gave her these manifestations of his tenderness, these marks of His divine predilection. Sister Margaret, prostrate in humble love, prayed fervently for some time, then, raising her eyes towards the Sacred Host, she beheld there, her Divine Saviour, who had assumed the form of a lovely child, some three years old.

It is not for us to attempt to express the sublime effects which these heavenly favors produce within the soul, it is not given to earth to portray the blissful emanations, which the pure love of God excites within us. We can only say that the ravishing beauty of the Infant Jesus, left impressions so sweet, so deep, and so lasting within her heart, that she could never after look upon earthly beauty without a feeling of dislike.

All earth's loveliness had gone upwards and after this flitting gleam of celestial beauty, Sister Margaret felt that nothing here below could ever cause satisfaction to her heart, or merit its affections; that all things of earth, were worthy but a passing glance.

Henceforth, she trod the weary paths of life, as the exile treads the flowery shores of a stranger clime.

### CHAPTER THIRD.

Foundation of Ville-Marie.—Chomedey de Maisonneuve.—The Congregation of Notre-Dame, Troyes.—The mysterious dream: "Go, and I will never abandon Thee," or a Mother's voice.—Margaret Bourgeoys leaves her native city.—Mr. Cossard and Madam de Chulv accompany her as far as Paris.—She encounters heavy crosses in this city.—The Carmelites again.—Humiliations during the journey.—The heroic Sister leaves the shores of her native land.

Up to the year 1642, no permanent settlement had been made on the island of Montreal, Providence willed not that "commercial enterprise or royal ambition" should take part in its foundation. It was to be the work of God alone, and for this purpose, many fervent Christians were inspired to consecrate their fortunes and their lives to the noble undertaking. The religious enthusiasm led to many great and heroic deeds, and when the will of Heaven, so clearly manifested to MM. Olier and Royer de la Dauversière, was communicated to the self sacrificing colonists, a cry similar to that re-echoed by the crusaders of old resounded throughout all France. Leclercq, one of the Recollet Fathers, in speaking of the foundation of the city of Montreal, says: "It is to Mr. Olier, founder of the "society of Saint Sulpice, that we are indebted for this glorious "undertaking. It had long been his cherished project, and "of all the designs formed to conquer the New-World to the "empire of Jesus-Christ, Mr. Olier's is unrivalled, as regards "disinterestedness, solidity and well concerted plans." Through the active endeavors of the Montreal Company, an expedition was made ready for the spring of 1641. Paul de Chomedey de Maisonneuve, a nobleman of distinguished worth, and a native of Troyes, in Champagne, was chosen to commence this glorious undertaking. Accustomed to these hazardous enterprises, from his very youth, and thoroughly imbued with the loftiest sentiments of honor, inspired by religion, he was well qualified for this perilous and laudable design. Before leaving

his native country, he wished, however, to pay his relatives a visit and spend a few days in their midst. Consequently, he set out for Troyes, where two of his sisters resided : ~~Madam~~ *Mrs* Chuly, of whom we have already spoken, and ~~Madame de~~ *Mrs* Chomedey. The latter was a member of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, and bore in religion the name of Sister Louisa of Saint-Mary. Hearing her brother speak of the projected settlement in Canada, of his nomination to the office of Governor, and the subsequent establishment of a religious community devoted to the instruction of youth, Sister Louisa thought within herself, that perhaps all these circumstances had been permitted by God, to procure her the means of exercising her zeal in this far off land. The pious Sister, had oftentimes too, entertained a strong desire to shed her blood in defence of her faith ; her prayer, it would seem, had now been heard, and mentioning this to her brother she proposed that he should take two or three of the nuns with him to Canada ; the entire community, entering into her plans, made the same request. Notwithstanding, Mr. de Maisonneuve's good will, circumstances were unfavorable, and he was compelled to inform the Sisters, that a house of their order was incompatible with the present state of things. The nuns insisted, thinking in this moment of strong desire, that with a good will every obstacle could be overcome ; but all to no purpose, Mr. de Maisonneuve was inflexible ; however, to soften his refusal, he gave them hopes for the future, and accepted as a pledge of their mutual promise, a picture of our Blessed Lady, around which was placed the following inscription in golden letters :

" O Virgin, Queen and Mother, in the city that bears thy name,  
Keep, O keep a place, for the Congregation of Notre Dame."

Or these events transpired, about the time of Sister Margaret's trouble and humiliation, with regard to her vocation. Rumor had already brought to her ear, news of the future establishment in Canada, in a city, specially consecrated to the Mother of God. She heard too, of the active part, which the Sisters of the Congregation, were to take, or hoped to take, in



its foundation, but of her future mission, no manifestation had as yet been given. At this time, one of Sister Margaret's companions who had become quite enthusiastic on the subject, endeavored to dissuade her from embracing the religious life, saying with an air of assurance. "That they would render more glory to God, by consecrating their lives to His service in the New World. No doubt these pure motives and zealous reasonings, were inspired by God ; Sister Margaret was strangely impressed. Visions of that far off land, haunted her daily thoughts, and hovered around her dreams at night. She felt happy, and she knew not why. Perhaps it was because in that distant vista, she descried numberless multitudes, thronging around Mary's Altar, offering there, the incense of their pure devotion, to the Queen of Heaven ; she determined at last, to communicate her feelings on this subject, to the directress of the sodality to which she belonged. It was no other than Sister Mary of Saint Louisa. No one could give a higher appreciation to Margaret's character, at all times, so generous and so noble. The worthy Nun seemed delighted, beyond expression and the thought came into her mind, that Sister Margaret might possibly be chosen by God, for this distant mission. "She is indeed" said Sister Louisa, "a soul of heroic courage, of unsurpassed virtue ; her stamp of character, renders her suitable in every way, for so praise worthy an undertaking." The good news was soon circulated throughout the community, and the rejoiced Sisterhood proposed that Margaret should accompany them to Canada, convinced that she would be to them, a priceless acquisition. "These good Sisters," she writes, "desired that I should accompany them to Canada, I gladly promised to be of the number." Several long months elapsed. During this interval M. de Maisonneuve was compelled to return to France, in order to obtain a recruit of strong courageous men for the defence of the Colony. His work completed, and in awaiting the spring of 1653, to return to Canada, he repaired for the second time to Troyes, for the purpose of visiting his family. A few days previous to his arrival in this city, Sister Margaret had a dream,

which greatly impressed her. "God," says a distinguished writer, "manifests His will in various ways, and the lives of "many holy persons, both in the Old and the New Testament "prove that He oftentimes made use of this mysterious language." Sister Margaret, called to promote God's glory, in the New World, was favored in this way. She perceived during her sleep, a gentleman of a grave and dignified appearance, dressed in a style that recalled the Secular and the Ecclesiastic. His features were entirely unknown, and notwithstanding remained deeply graven upon her mind ; while something seemed to tell her, that she was to have particular relations with this stranger. The next morning, she related the event to some of her friends, wondering at the same time, what such a dream could signify. The explanation was given a few days later. M. de Maisonneuve visited the Congregation as usual.

We may naturally suppose, that Sister Louisa and the other Nuns did not fail to renew their solicitations, relative to the mission of Canada, but alas ! they were doomed to receive a second refusal, M. de Maisonneuve could not accept of their services. The almost continual incursions of the Iroquois tribe, had retarded the progress of the colony, while the habitations of Ville Marie were, in no manner, suitable for Nuns of a cloistered Order. Sister Louisa still entreated however, and the conversation becoming more and more animated, she was led to speak of the Prefect of the External Congregation. She referred to Sister Margaret's extraordinary life, to the spirit of zeal with which she was animated for the instruction of youth, and dwelt particularly upon the inestimable advantages, which the colony would derive from a person of her energy and virtue. The Governor of Ville Marie listened attentively to all this ; his curiosity increased and finally he requested to see Sister Margaret.

She was immediately summoned to the parlor, to take part in a conversation, which could not but prove interesting to her. The door was thrown open and Sister Margaret announced ; but hardly had her feet touched the threshold, when she drew back seized with wonder and astonishment : her eyes fell instinctively

on Mr. de Maisonneuve, and in him she recognized the danger, she had seen in her dream. "Behold ! she exclaimed, behold my Priest ! behold him, whom I saw in my dream !"

An introduction so singular and so unexpected, surprised all present, and each in turn asked for an explanation.

Sister Margaret complied most willingly and related the circumstances of her dream, with charming grace and simplicity. The occurrence was a source of recreation, for some time, and finally the conversation took a more serious turn.

M. de Maisonneuve had been an enraptured listener, and while Margaret spoke, he felt a strange interest and esteem deepen within him. Besides a strong conviction, that he should do all in his power to enrich the youthful colony with this precious treasure. Consequently he asked Sister Margaret if she had any inclination for Ville Marie, and if she would consent to accompany him there, to devote herself to the instruction of youth. She answered without hesitation that, if her ecclesiastical superiors gave their approbation, she would go most willingly. The Sisters of the Congregation felt annoyed at this conclusion, and renewed their entreaties, but without success. The Montreal Company under whose auspices M. de Maisonneuve acted, did not approve of cloistered nuns for the rising Colony, but preferred, for the moment teachers who could be easily transferred according to the exigences of time and place. The Sisters fearing for the success of their plans, recalled to Sister Margaret, half chidingly, half playfully, the promise she had made to be of their number, when called to Canada. To this, she answered agreeably, "that she had indeed given her word "to accompany them, but she had made no promise not to go "without them." ✕

Some time after, Miss Crolo, the young girl who owed the preservation of her life and honor, to Sister Margaret's courageous interference, hearing of all that had taken place, sought out M. de Maisonneuve, and begged of him, to allow her to accompany Sister Margaret if she went to Canada. His pecuniary resources were limited, so he declined her services. This refusal was a severe blow to our courageous Margaret. The

bright visions, which had glimmered on the threshold of her future vanished, and strange sad forebodings, thronged within her breast.

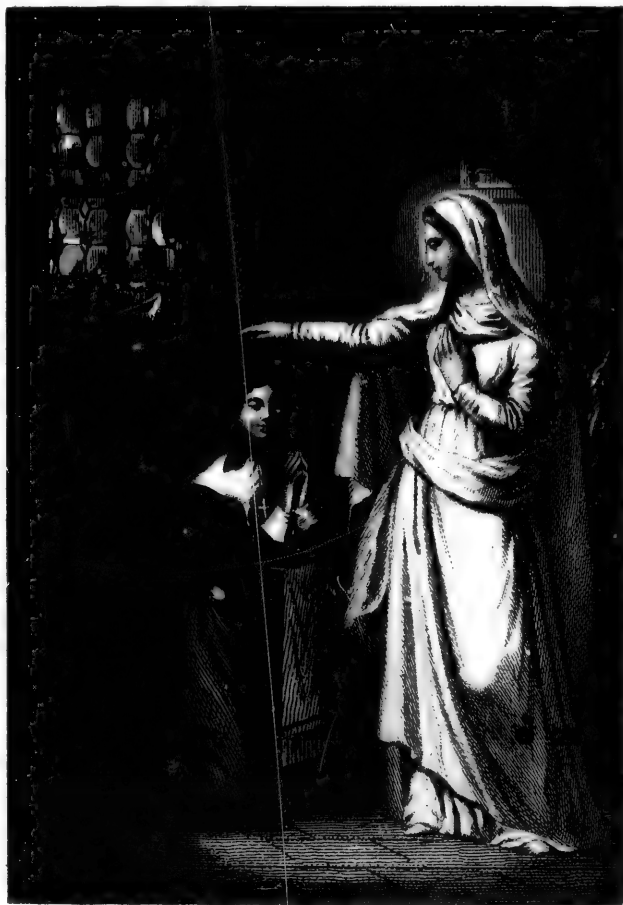
Fancy wrought up its varied scenes, and pictured to her imagination, those far off wilds, where the long lone hours would pass, bereft of friends and sympathy, with no kindred heart, to whom she might unburden those inward sorrows, which lose half their bitterness when shared. She could leave the well-loved shores of Frances, in obedience to her Master's call, but the solitary journey, willed He, that she should brave the stormy deep, companionless, alone? Was it according to the rules of christian prudence, to travel thus in the company of a single gentleman, and a recruit of soldiers?—saddened by these reflexions, she sought her spiritual adviser, and revealed to him her doubts and fears. M<sup>r</sup>. Jendret was fully acquainted with all these details, and at the same time strongly convinced that these seeming difficulties were permitted by divine will. Nevertheless, before giving Sister Margaret a definite answer, he recommended the matter earnestly to God, for the space of three days.

At the expiration of this time, he told her to calm her fears, and depart for Canada, adding, that "the little community they had attempted in Troyes, would be fully realized in Canada." "To all this," writes Sister Margaret, "I replied that I was alone, and alone I could not form a community" he answered: "You, your good angel and mine, make three." "Most probably he had been informed of the attempts made "by the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, as well as "of the picture given by them to M<sup>r</sup>. de Maisonneuve, and of "which I had as yet heard nothing. I then made known my "fears to Mr. Jendret and the extreme repugnance I felt to "travel alone, that a companion had been refused me, and I "could not make up my mind to go with a single gentleman, whom I had met but once. This is surely an obstacle "not to be overcome: Go, he answered, go, and place yourself under Mr. de Maisonneuve's protection, as confidently "as you would, were he first knight of honor to the Queen of

"Angels. Abandon yourself entirely to his direction." She adds: "Then I remembered, that I had not consulted Mr. Profit, to whom I generally addressed myself in Mr. Jendret's absence. He also requested three days, before giving me an answer, after which he told me to leave without the slightest hesitation for Canada." Sister Margaret had taken every necessary precaution, still she remained unsatisfied, her heavenly Mother, must needs come in person and revive the drooping spirits of her child, and assure her that God indeed willed this sacrifice and that She "Help of Christians," would be her guardian and her shield in every danger.

"One morning," she tells us, "as I was meditating in my room, undisturbed by thoughts of my painful journey, a most beautiful lady of majestic mien, suddenly stood before me. She was clothed in a robe of white serge, and encircled by a halo of golden light; and a voice whose sweetly thrilling sounds I can never forget, said: "Go, and I will never abandon Thee," and I knew at once it was my heavenly Mother, although I could not see her face. I felt my inmost being suddenly imbued with celestial strength, with a courage never before experienced." Sister Margaret arose from prayer, her faith, her hope, her love renewed. A few days previous to this event, Mr. de Maisonneuve had written to his sister, ~~Madam de~~ <sup>Madame de</sup> Chuly, requesting her to meet him in Paris, and to bring Sister Margaret with her. As few persons were aware of her intended departure for Canada, this journey to Paris in ~~Madam de~~ Chuly's company, excited no suspicion, so much the more, as she only took a small parcel with her.

"I was perfectly convinced," she writes, "that if this mission came from God, I should want for nothing, and I started thus with neither money, nor baggage, except a small parcel that I carried myself." Alluding to this event at a later period, she said: "I did not take a farthing for my journey, and ever since the festival of the Rosary, 1640, when my heart was touched at the sight of Mary's statue, I have always been led by this path of perfection, but alas! through my own want of correspondence, I have derived but little



*Engr. Dier, 3e, r. Rougemont, Paris.*

*Massard del et sculp.*

*La très Sainte Vierge apparaissant à la sœur Bourgeoys, lui ordonne de partir pour Villemarie, et l'assure de sa protection.*

*The Blessed Virgin appears to Sister Bourgeoys, and commands her to depart for Ville-Marie. "Go, and I will never abandon you!"*





"profit. Still, when these occasions presented themselves, I have always promised Our Lord that, with the help of His grace, I would endeavor to advance."

Instances of so heroic an abandon, into the hands of Providence, seldom occur, and no spirit could be more conformable to the divine inculcations given by Our Lord himself, when he said to His Apostles: "That they should take nothing for their journey, but a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse." (Saint-Mark, chap. 6th, ver. 8th.)

Thus disposed, Sister Margaret left her native city. It was the month of February, 1653. She was accompanied by Madam de Chuly, and her uncle, Mr. Cossard. So far her secret had been faithfully guarded, but when they had proceeded some distance on their route, Margaret disclosed the real motive of her journey. As she spoke with her natural vivacity and mirthfulness, her friends concluded that it was only to enliven the conversation, and were only persuaded of the reality when upon reaching Paris, she requested her uncle to accompany her to a Notary's office, where she had a little business to transact. Mr. Cossard consented, but great was his surprise when she informed him that it was to make her will, and as guardian of her younger brother and sister, she resigned in their favor all claims to inheritance. Afflicted beyond expression, her uncle gazed sadly upon her, and entreated her to change, he said all that human prudence and tenderness could suggest; he spoke of the strong family tie that bound her to Troyes; he recalled all the dearest associations of her youth, but seeing that all these considerations were vain, he endeavored to arouse her fears, and represented to her the rashness, the extravagance of such a step. Could she exchange the familiar scenes of home for that bleak wilderness, where no sound was heard, save the cries of the savage war dance and the hunter's shouts which startled even the wild beasts from their lairs? Where poisoned arrows and deadly tomahawks, dripping with their victims blood, whizzed through the air! Useless pleadings! immoveable as the rock, against which the angry waves have dashed for ages, she stood, firm and unshaken. Heaven

had spoken ; why should she give ear to earth ? It would appear from Sister Margaret's memoirs, that Madam de Chuly also disapproved of her determination, and this was the reason why she communicated her intentions along the route. She writes : " My uncle and Madam de Chuly were obliged to " return to Troyes, and their departure left me more at ease." The act which marked Sister Margaret's decision was written and signed, after which Mr. Cossard and Madam de Chuly returned almost in despair to Troyes.

No sooner, was the real motive of her journey to Paris, made known, when every mouth was open to blame and to disapprove, while an avalanche of letters, filled with reproaches of every kind, fell upon her at Paris. Those events did not cause her courage to falter, fortunately, for other trials were on the way. During her stay in this city, Sister Margaret sojourned with a lady of distinction, named Miss de Bellevue, to whom she endeared herself in a particular manner, and received in return, marks of the most sincere and lively interest. This lady was extremely grieved, when she heard that Sister Margaret was on the point of leaving for Canada, and being told of her former desire, to enter the Carmelite Order in Troyes, she determined to do all in her power, to prevent this departure. She seemed certain of success for one of her brothers, was at this time, Provincial of the Order. The last days of Margaret's stay in Paris had arrived.

One morning, while busily engaged in her final preparations, Miss de Bellevue came to her, saying " that perfectly aware " of her predilection for the Carmelite Order, she begged that " she would give up her crazy adventure, and promised to do " all in her power, to procure her entrance into any one of the " convents, she preferred ; still more her brother, who was Provincial of the Order, gave her full liberty to choose the monastery, she desired and surely," she added, " his recommendation is more than enough." These offers, threw Sister Margaret into a strange perplexity. Here then is the dearest wish of her heart realized. The temptation was a delicate one. Perhaps after all it was the will of God that she should become a Car-

melite. What was she to do? After a few moments reflection, she resolved to seek counsel, and was inspired to direct her steps, towards the Convent of the Jesuits; there, she addressed herself to the very first Father, whom she chanced to meet. This circumstance had been foreseen, by an allwise and watchful Providence! The venerable religious, was no other than an ancient missionary, who had long labored among the savage tribes of Canada. No person could have proved more suitable at this moment and in giving her the assurance, that she was accomplishing the will of Heaven, he restored peace and calm to her tortured mind. She returned to Miss de Bellevue, and thanked her friends there, for their kind offers, which she felt she could not in conscience accept. The next morning she left Paris, for the city of Orleans. There as elsewhere, her path was to be chequered by trials and humiliations. As she was alone, simply dressed, and unknown to her travelling companions, but little attention was paid her; she was even looked upon as a person of little consequence, so much so that when they reached the hotel, where they were to spend the night, the landlady refused absolutely to receive her. After some discussion, an unknown gentleman presented himself and interceded in her behalf, in consequence, she was received and allowed to enter and rest for the night. At one other station, she received the same affront:

“After many solicitations to be allowed to enter,” she writes, “I was finally led to a back chamber for the night. I locked the door, and recommending myself to God, that he might shield me from all danger, in this rather suspicious looking apartment, I did not undress, but threw myself upon a bed, not to sleep alas! For some time after, repeated knocks and attempts to enter, obliged me to rise and assure myself that the lock was secure. I spoke to those outside as if I were a person of great consideration, adding that I should certainly complain of them, and that their impertinence would be severely punished. My words produced the desired effect, they withdrew muttering some incoherent language. The next morning, as I raised the hangings which

“concealed a part of the room, I discovered an open door, and a troop of drunken men lying on the floor, after their night's revel. I was warned in this manner, of the danger from which I had been preserved.”

Having escaped this peril, Sister Bourgeoys left the hotel early, and secured her passage in the vessel, which was to convey her from Orleans to Nantes. This journey, proved more consoling than the preceding ones. With her usual tact for inciting to good, the pious Sister prevailed upon her fellow travellers to sanctify their voyage by various little practices of piety. Each day, the beads were recited in common and a spiritual lecture read. Upon one occasion she prevailed on the Captain of the vessel, to delay at a certain station, that all might hear mass. Among the passengers was a young man destined to accompany Mr. de Maisonneuve to Canada. As the vessel neared the shore, he stepped forward, and offering his services to Sister Bourgeoys, begged to take charge of her parcel. She yielded reluctantly.

This act was to draw down other humiliations upon the pious Sister. God had preordained every act relative to her extraordinary vocation, so that even the most trivial might *trifling* win for her a degree of glory, to add to that crown already glorious, by the heroism of her sacrifice.

When Mr. de Maisonneuve left Paris, he gave Sister Bourgeoys a letter of introduction to a merchant of the city of Nantes, named Mr. Lecoq. Unaware that this gentleman bore another name, she requested several persons to inform her, where he resided. No one could give her a satisfactory answer. After searching in vain for some time, she at last met with a gentleman who was no other than the object of her enquiry. Mr. Lecoq asked her at once, if she was not the person recommended to him by Mr. de Maisonneuve. She answered in the affirmative and presented her letter. Mr. Lecoq pointed out his dwelling, promising to follow her shortly. Here an other act of virtue was to be performed.

Sister Bourgeoys following his directions soon reached the house. The mistress of the mansion, perceiving this young

person and the youth beside her carrying a parcel, conceived an unfavorable opinion and closed the door without further ceremony. Undisturbed at this strange reception, she smiled and withdrew to a church near by. After spending some time in prayer, she returned to the house of Mr. Lecoq, but the good lady persisted in her refusal, and compelled the strangers to turn away for the second time. As she descended the steps, the gentleman himself appeared, gave all necessary explanation and thus calmed his lady's fears. It was her turn to be humbled. Confused, she apologized for her rudeness, and very soon, won by Sister Bourgeoys' piety, gentleness and affability, she introduced her into the intimacy of the family circle, where the sister gained the esteem and veneration of all. The hour of separation drew near.

A few days before her departure, Sister Bourgeoys received a letter from the Provincial of the Carmelites, renewing his former offers, and giving her full liberty, to enter any Convent of the Order. "This kind religious" she writes "pressed me strongly to accept." Harassed by these repeated entreaties, she consulted a religious Carmelite, but alas! instead of restoring her peace of mind, he only increased her uneasiness, advised her to remain in France, and follow her first inspiration. This was not all. Mr. de Maisonneuve received at the same time, anonymous letters, written, no doubt, to disquiet him with regard to Sister Bourgeoys.

He was given to understand that this young person had a marked vocation for the Carmelites, and that he could not take her away from France, without crossing the designs of God; that it was his duty to exert all his influence and prevent her departure. Mr. de Maisonneuve, was not a man easily to be imposed upon, too many precautions had been taken, too many evident manifestations of God's will had been given, however, he determined to show these letters to Sister Bourgeoys. All these incidents combined, threw her into a strange state of interior desolation. Fearing to mar the designs of Heaven upon her soul, should she refuse to become a Carmelite, fearing to resist His will should she remain in France.

She knew not what to do. Bathed in tears, she again sought relief in prayer. The first church she entered was that of the Capuchin Friars, and there, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed to the veneration of the faithful. Casting herself at the feet of her Divine Lord, really present on the Altar, she protested again and again that her sole desire was to know and to accomplish the will of Heaven, even though it were to call for the sacrifice of her very life. Prayer's mighty power, was here triumphant, hardly had she uttered these words, when her heart was restored to its wonted peace and calm. God had allowed this bitter trial to strengthen and to purify a soul so generous and devoted. She arose and left the church, firmer than ever in the conviction that her mission extended as far as the wilds of Canada. "In one moment," she writes, "all my painful feelings subsided, and I became once more calm and happy. A strong impression remained that I should undertake this journey, and I left the church sweetly consoled at the thought that I was indeed accomplishing God's holy will." Seeking Mr. de Maisonneuve, she made him acquainted with her determination to persevere, until her latest breath, in the service of God at Ville-Marie. This done, immediate preparations were made for leaving France. It was with feelings of regret that Mr. Lecoq's family saw the hour of separation draw near. Sister Bourgeoys had endeared herself to all its members, by her gay, happy disposition, her rare virtues and precious qualities of mind and heart. Mr. Lecoq in particular testified his esteem and high appreciation, by those delicate attentions, which best prove the sentiments of the heart. He procured her all the necessary conveniences for a long sea voyage, bed and bedding, besides a supply of fresh water, which is such a luxury at sea. Finally, the 20th of June, 1653, having bid an affectionate farewell to the estimable family whose hospitality she had enjoyed, Sister Bourgeoys renewed her sacrifice with Christian fortitude, and ascended the Saint-Nicholas, which was to bear her across the sea far from her childhood's home, far from the dear associations of maturer years.....

The last signal had been given ; the last farewells had been exchanged. The little vessel unmoored, left the busy port, and glided out upon the broad bosom of the deep, as if conscious of her errand of mercy and love. Eyes grown dim with weeping, gazed upon the receding shores of their native land, and perchance when the last rays of the setting sun had ceased to linger in the west, from these exiled hearts, the sad sweet hymn of eve' was borne the seas along :

Oh! the deep soul it breathed!—the love, the woe,  
The fervor, poured in that full gush of song,  
As it went floating through the fiery glow  
Of the rich sunset! bringing thoughts of home,  
With all her vesper voices o'er the main.  
Which seemed responsive in its murmuring flow,  
“Ave Sanctissima”—how oft that lay—  
Hath melted from my heart the martyr strength away!  
The echoes came softly.....

Ave Sanctissima!

'Tis nightfall on the sea;

Ora pro nobis!

Our souls rise to Thee!

Watch us while shadows lie

O'er the dim water spread,

Hear the hearts lonely sigh

Thine too, hath bled,

Ora pro nobis!

The wave must rock our sleep,

Ora Mater, ora!

Thou star of the deep.

(HEMANS.)



## "Sister Bourgeoys's voyage to Canada."

### CHAPTER FOURTH.

Sister Bourgeoys meets with surprise and pleasure, several persons of her sex on board the vessel. — Sad accident. — The soldiers endeavor to escape by jumping into the sea. — Sister Bourgeoys' kindness and attention to the sick and dying during the voyage. — State of Ville-Marie at this time. — The vessel finally reaches the port of Quebec. — Sister Bourgeoys and Miss Manse meet, (note). — The Colonists leave Quebec for Ville Marie.

Whatever Sister Bourgeoys' sad emotions, may have been, at the thought of the perilous voyage and uncertain future, they were considerably lessened by the agreeable surprise that awaited her on board the vessel. The idea of travelling alone with soldiers and sailors was extremely repugnant, and perhaps her greatest sacrifice ; therefore, we can easily imagine her joy upon meeting with several persons of her own sex among the passengers. Notwithstanding this satisfaction, the journey was productive of much merit. But for Sister Bourgeoys, whose (magnanimous) longings only tended to resemble her Divine Saviour, no humiliation was too great, no suffering too acute. We have already remarked, that Mr. Lecoq, to whom the vessel belonged, had procured Sister Bourgeoys a supply of fresh water for the voyage, circumstances, however, prevented her from profiting of this kind attention, for when the vessel was some leagues distant from France, the attendants refused to furnish her with the daily supply, and she was thus compelled to share the sailors beverage. One word from her would have set all things right, but this word she would not say : and from other lips than hers, came the account of so unkind an act. After sailing some three hundred leagues, it was discovered that the vessel leaked, and was in bad order to withstand a storm at sea. In consequence it became necessary to return to land. Sister Bourgeoys in speaking of this event says : " We were " exposed to a thousand dangers, as we neared the land, and " would inevitably have perished, had not kind Heaven ins-

“ pired the inhabitants of the place to come to our assistance.  
“ I was somewhat alarmed, as we were over one hundred and  
“ twenty passengers, besides a hundred and eight soldiers, ill  
“ prepared for death, and we had no priest with us. These  
“ soldiers were furious and M. de Maisonneuve was obliged to  
“ confine them on an island, from which they tried to escape  
“ by leaping into the sea. It took considerable time to prepare  
“ another vessel, at last all was ready for the 20th of July, and  
“ after hearing mass, with all possible devotion, we embarked  
“ trusting in Him, who rules the elements.”

The foundation of Ville Marie was God's own work, it was necessary then, that it should bear the impress of trial and adversity, while its first courageous settlers, were to be numbered, mid heroes and martyrs.

Faithful to the call of Heaven, they had forsaken the smiling provinces of their native land, though they saw in the far off vista, but toil, privation and uncertain fate. “ God Chastens those He loves,” and in return for the voluntary oblation, he gave suffering and death. A violent malady broke out among the passengers, and eight of the men under M. de Maisonneuve's leadership, were consigned to a watery grave.

“ A sound went up, the waves dark sleep was broken,  
Upon the sea was heard a midnight oar,  
Of man's brief course, a troubled moment's token,  
Th' eternal waters to their barriers bore.”

God willed that they should go thus far, no farther. Sister Bourgeoys' compassionate heart was alive to these misfortunes. (All that sympathy and charity could suggest was done, to allëviate their sufferings and assuage their sorrows.) The better to administer to their wants, she slept upon a pile of cordage, and there, forgetful of her own necessities, she nursed the sick, consoled the distressed. She had persisted in her refusal to attend M. de Maisonneuve's table, and when he sent her food, filtered water and wine, she received it gratefully and distributed it among the patients. She herself shared the common food of the equipage, drank the ropy, unsavory water from the

common cask, out of a leather cup, and that but once a day : a custom she ever afterwards preserved, through devotion to Our Lord's most bitter potion of vinegar and gall, upon the cross. She stood beside those dying men, day and night, like a ministering Angel from some heavenly sphere, and it was happy for them, that Margaret Bourgeoys had been strong and generous in the hour of trial and sacrifice, that she had struggled against temptation when leaving her native land, else perhaps less comfort, less resignation, had attended their dying pillow. These nights upon the deep, had their own mysterious eloquence, when no sound was heard save the groans of the dying, and the dashing of the waves as they sang their low solemn requiem, to these first fruits of her glorious sacrifice. Her sojourn in the vessel, was the triumph of apostolic zeal and perfect charity, for when the sickness had subsided, and all was calm on deck, she assembled there, sailors and soldiers, rendered them familiar with the word of God, explained to them, the rudiments of their faith, and each evening, when twilight cast its shades around exterior objects, the raised heart and bended knee of these (uncouth) disciples, evinced the action of grace within their souls. Ah ! did not Angels look down lovingly from their azure homes, and spread their protecting wings around that solitary vessel, as it sped on its lonely course across the deep, with its rich harvest of souls, gained to God ? Margaret, this was thy first mission ! Ah ! dear reader, is there not something beautiful, something touching and consoling to piety and religion. in these circumstances connected with Sister Bourgeoys' first journey across the ocean ? Do we not witness in the conduct of this strong minded woman, the precious results of generosity, sacrifice and large-heartedness with God ? Undoubtedly, and the strayed sheep, she had won back to the Good Shepherd's loving bosom, was for her a sufficient reward, for her untiring patience, her past hours of rude trial. Ah ! when struggling against temptation, when crushed, neath the weight of our crosses and afflictions, let us remember, that upon our steadfastness and perseverance in yielding to the solicitations of grace, may perhaps depend,

consolations and merits akin to those of Margaret Bourgeoys.

All was calm at sea, not so with the handful of brave men, left by M. de Maisonneuve to defend the site of Ville Marie. Deprived of all assistance, they were constantly exposed to the fury of the Iroquois, fortunately they were encouraged at this moment by the news brought to them by a French vessel, "that M. de Maisonneuve was on route, with a recruit of over a hundred men." Reverend Mother Mary of the Incarnation, religious Ursuline, writes from Quebec as follows: "The continual incursions of the Iroquois, have caused immense damage in every quarter, and we have been in a state of perpetual alarm and anxiety, lest circumstances should compel us to abandon all, and return to France. We are consoled by the thought, that what is in God's keeping is secure, and for this reason, the little settlement at Ville Marie is beyond their power, the Indians, meeting with a vigorous resistance from its heroic defenders, retreated with a heavy loss. . . . We are strengthened in the midst of our afflictions, by the prospect of assistance, which M. de Maisonneuve is to bring us from France."

In order to hasten, if possible, the arrival of the recruit, the inhabitants of Quebec, offered up public prayers, and the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, lasted for several days. Heaven listened to these supplications.

"We reached Quebec," writes Sister Bourgeoys, "the 22nd day of September, and our arrival caused universal joy."

It is not for us to describe the emotions, which filled each stranger's heart, when treading for the first time the soil of Canada. It was to them the promised land, attained after many an inward struggle, many a sacrifice, many a bitter tear. However varied the sentiments of each heart, their first demonstration was marked, or rather prompted by a common feeling, gratitude to God, and wending their way towards the humble temple of the Most High, they united their voices in a solemn thanksgiving, which hill and dale re-echoed. Sister Bourgeoys in portraying the painful position of the inhabitants of Quebec says: "The settlement of Quebec, presented a most dreary

"appearance at the time of our arrival. The Upper Town, "consisted of only five or six habitations ; the Lower Town, "two store-houses, one belonging to the Jesuit Fathers, the "other to the Montreal Company. Everything looked so poor "and forsaken, that our inmost pity was excited." M. de Lauzon, Governor General, did all in his power to retain the recruit at Quebec and it required M. de Maisonneuve's firmness and energy, to surmount the obstacles he encountered on this occasion.

At the same time, the Ursulines endeavored to prevail upon Sister Bourgeoys to share their home. She declined, for she felt that her mission was not there, besides, her services were still necessary to those of the travellers, who had not yet recovered their strength. It was on this occasion, that Sister Bourgeoys became acquainted with Miss Manse, (1) who had

(1) "Miss Jane Manse," writes one of her biographers, "was one of the principal instruments chosen by God to contribute toward the establishment of Ville-Marie, descended from an honorable family of Nogent, in Champagne. An object of divine predilection from her very infancy, and destined for the fulfilment of God's designs upon Ville-Marie, she felt a distaste for the world, even before she knew its joys. Upon attaining her seventh year, she was inspired to consecrate herself to God by a vow of perpetual virginity. After her father's death, she gave herself entirely up to the practices of a devout life, without feeling any particular attraction towards the religious state. God made known his will with regard to her mission in Canada in the following manner: It was in the month of April, 1640, that Miss Manse heard her future home mentioned for the first time. During a visit, which she made about this period, to the city of Langres, she met with an ecclesiastic who spoke to her of the zeal and devotedness, evinced by two noble ladies of France in the welfare of this far off mission. One of them was Madam de la Peltrie, a young widow, who had taken the heroic resolution to accompany some Ursulines to Quebec, for the purpose of establishing a house of their order there; the other, Madam la Duchesse d'Aiguillon, to whose liberalities the Hospitallers of Dieppe owed their foundation. The words of the pious priest were the means by which God made known her vocation. She felt at once an irresistible inclination to take part in the good work. Surprised at herself, Miss Manse did all in her power to banish the thought from her mind,—she reflected that a constitution, as weak and delicate as hers, could never become acclimated to a country as cold and severe as Canada. In a state of strange agitation, she went and opened her whole heart to her Director, who tried to persuade her that there was no obligation for her to follow this inspiration. His words were vain. Her native city became for her a sort of prison, from which she would fain escape to seek that spot, to which the voice of God seemed to call her. Some weeks later, she went to Paris, and consulted Father Lallemand, a Jesuit of that city. As she did not declare her real motive for leaving home, her friends concluded that she was under the influence of some strong temptation, and that her only pretence was to seek admiration

arrived in Canada some time before, to lay the foundations of the Hotel Dieu hospital, under the auspices of Madam the Duchess de Bullion.

These two holy women were destined by Divine Providence to contribute towards the sanctification of the colony each in her way ; and nothing could be more conducive to its growing prosperity than the mild influence which they exercised throughout the settlement. "If woman," says a distinguished French writer, "is excluded from the brilliant functions of public life, she is called upon nevertheless, to exercise a (sacerdotal) ministry in the bosom of Christianity."

And Ozanam, in his remarkable work, adds : "It would seem as if nothing, great or glorious, could be achieved in the Church without the concurrence of woman. Conspicuous even, in the first ages of Christianity, we see her in the bloody arena, where the victor's crown awaited the martyr, and

in that city. Her personal beauty was remarkable. The visit to Paris lasted some months, and during this time, she met with a distinguished Jesuit, Père de Saint-Jure, to whom she communicated her strangely tenacious inclination. He listened for some time, then replied : "That he had never witnessed a clearer manifestation of the Divine Will." This decision filled her with joy, and she hastened home to justify and explain her inexplicable conduct. Her resolution was soon known beyond the borders of her native city. Everyone wished to see and hear her. The Queen herself and many noble ladies took pleasure in entertaining her. Madam de Bullion, a rich widow who was desirous of contributing towards the good work in Canada, asked Miss Manse one day how she would like to go and take charge of an Hospital there. Miss Manse replied that for such an undertaking she feared but little reliance could be placed upon her, because of her delicate constitution, still, she had abandoned herself to God, and desired above all things to render her actions conformable to His holy will. Soon after, hearing that vessels were on the point of leaving France for Canada, she gave a satisfactory answer to Madam de Bullion, and received from her all necessary information regarding the good work she was now to undertake. Bidding a hasty "good bye" to her friends and relatives, she started for "La Rochelle," from which port the vessels were to sail. In this city, she was introduced to several members of the Montreal Company, and in particular to Mr. de la Dauversière, who prevailed upon her to join the association. She left France, the blessing of God accompanied her,—the foundations of the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital were laid,—and though Miss Manse never assumed the religious garb, she administered with wonderful prudence and wisdom the yearly revenues, which she received from the Duchess de Bullion. Two or three years later, she returned to France, in order to procure the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu de la Flèche for the Hospital of Ville-Marie. She continued, however, after their arrival to fulfil the intentions of the Duchess de Bullion, up to the time of her death, which took place in June, 1673. She had consecrated thirty-three years of her existence to the welfare of Canada, and died in odor of sanctity, at the age of sixty-seven.

“again disputing the possession of the forest to the anchorites of old. If Constantine raised his Labarum upon the towers of the Capitol, Saint-Helena raised the cross upon the walls of Jerusalem. Clovis, invoked the God of Clotilda, while Monica’s tears, redeemed the errors of Augustin. Saint-Benedict and Saint-Basil, the first legislators of the Cenobitical life, received counsel and advice from their holy sisters, Scholastica and Macrina. Later, the Countess Matilda, upheld with her chaste hands, the tottering throne of Gregory the VII. Joan of Arc saved France; Isabella of Castille presided over the discovery of a New World, while at a more recent period, we behold the seraphic Theresa, mingling with Bishops, Doctors and holy founders, in order to effect the interior reformation of society.” If then it be true, that piety maintains her empire and propagates her mysterious influence throughout the world by means of woman, if she is the instrument chosen by God, to make easy the road to Christian civilization, why should we hesitate to add to the list of saintly heroines, the names of Margaret Bourgeoys and Jane Manse. The annals of Ville-Marie teem with instances of the most noble and heroic fortitude, but pre-eminent stands the name of its Benefactress who watched over its cradle and grew with its growth.

Mr. de Maisonneuve related in detail all that he knew concerning Sister Bourgeoys’ marvellous vocation, and spoke of the hopes he entertained for the future because of her virtue. From this moment Miss Manse looked upon Sister Bourgeoys as a companion and a friend, sent by kind Heaven to lighten and share her labors.

Their acquaintance soon ripened into the strongest friendship and lasted during their entire lives. “Miss Manse returned to Ville-Marie, to circulate the good news of our arrival,” writes Sister Bourgeoys, “while I remained in Quebec, awaiting circumstances favorable to our departure. The men who composed our recruit, were as mild as lambs, gentle and submissive as so many religious, and I could not



“ but feel grateful to God, because of the marvellous change  
“ which divine grace had operated within their hearts. ”

Mr. de Maisonneuve had been an eye witness to the happy results of Sister Bourgeoys' counsels and examples upon these early defenders of Ville-Marie ; his esteem and veneration deepened, as he thought that on account of her influential teachings, more reliance could be placed upon the exertions of the colonists, and more sanguine expectations entertained for their future. And true it is, we do not find in the records of the times, that even one of their number, ever swerved from the paths of honor and virtue. All lived as christians, all died as heroes and martyrs. Sister Bourgeoys' sojourn in Quebec was prolonged far more than either desired or expected, on account of the formal refusal given, to furnish them with the vessels necessary for the transportation of their men and provisions.

The Governor General, Mr. de Lauzon, hoped by this means to retain them in Quebec. We read, “ that Mr. de Maisonneuve would never consent to this, declaring that his recruit “ had cost the Montreal Company too dearly to admit of even “ one man remaining.” Finally, after some difficulty, the obstacles were overcome, the necessary embarcations procured, and the little fleet under the protection of Heaven, steered their course towards Ville-Marie. Mr. de Maisonneuve remained the last of all, so as to be certain that not one man should be left behind.

A few days later, Quebec and its contradictions were out of sight, if not out of mind.



*Arrival, first occupations and influence of  
Sister Bourgeoys at Ville-Marie*  
CHAPTER FIFTH.

Ville Marie in the distance, Sister Bourgeoys reaches her destination.—Her emotions as she stepped on shore.—Joy of the colonists, upon the arrival of M. de Maisonneuve and his men.—Our Lady's Guard of honor.—Sister Bourgeoys' occupations at Ville Marie.—Singular piety of M. de Maisonneuve.—The Cross of Mount Royal.—Influence exercised by Sister Bourgeoys upon the colonists.—Her charity, towards all in need.

It was the month of November.—The joyous festivity of "All Saints", with its golden visions of immortality had passed, and in quick succession had vanished too, the commemoration of the beloved departed; that day so sad and yet so dear, when come back to us, the sweet gentle faces of those, whom we have laid in the silent tomb. Kind remembrance, each year thou recallest, sweet memories of the good and beautiful. Thy presence harmonizes well, with Autumnalia.

"When, the tints of summer, are fading fast,  
And the leaves are falling, with every blast."

It was about this time, that M. de Maisonneuve's fleet, glided slowly along the shores of the Saint Lawrence, while all eyes, admired the beautiful landscape, spread out before them. Immense woodlands with their variegated hues, of green, brown, red and yellow—here and there, near the banks of the river arose a wigwam, before which, the red man's child gambled in joyous glee, and the young indian girl, strolled listlessly upon the massy banks of the river. In the distance, stood the picturesque site of Ville Marie, shadowed by its rich autumnal foliage, its magnificent mountain, its forest of towering pine, oak, poplar and maple, whose varying outlines were given back, in the crystal waters below.

Their vessels neared the shore, as the sun was going down, and his farewell rays, were flushing with gold color and crimson, the fleecy clouds that lay between the mountains. Nature's

beauty was enhanced by the charms of a bright indian summer, as if to compensate our weary travellers, and give them in fairy visions, a last glimpse of the beautiful land, they had so generously forsaken. When the signal for landing was given, acclamations of joy, were heard on all sides, while Mount Royal, re-echoed the gladsome strains of 'welcome' and thanksgiving. It is not for us to describe Sister Bourgeoys' emotions, as she stepped on shore, though we feel that she shed tears of joy, and no doubt they fell with love and gratitude, upon the soil which was to be for half a century, the glorious theatre of her works of zeal, and the everlasting monument of her first heroic sacrifices. It is said that when Columbus, first gazed upon the fairy land of wealth and beauty he had discovered, a smile of triumph lit up his features, as conscious of being the discoverer of another world, he felt that his name would live for ever. Not unlike this illustrious man, Sister Bourgeoys, may have cast a triumphant glance upon the vast forests spread out before her, while her heart exulted with the deepest sentiments of joy, as she lifted the veil of the future, and in fancy gazed upon the golden harvests, which time would gather, into the Eternal Father's granary; then, she remembered that she had been chosen to lead these numberless hearts to the love and knowledge of the Christian's God.

During M. de Maisonneuve's absence, the few faithful colonists who remained behind, had been compelled more than once, to seek refuge within the fort, on account of the Iroquois. Constantly harassed by these savages, they were frequently called upon, to mourn the loss of some of their number. M. de Maisonneuve's arrival with more than a hundred robust courageous men, so strengthened and consoled their desponding hearts, that they left the fort, and returned to their habitations, abandoned some three years before. The spirit of concord and union that united these valiant soldiers of the faith, their disinterestedness, their devotion to the common good, their intrepidity in time of war, struck the Iroquois with amazement, and even inspired them with such terror, that the colonists, were never afterwards compelled to leave the settlement. Some

days after their arrival, the colonists set to work bravely, some felling trees, some clearing the ground, while others with building materials, hastened to lay the foundations of their future dwellings, so as to leave as soon as possible, the fort, where they were obliged to sojourn.

Impressed with a lively faith and a strong sense of religion, individuality was laid aside, common wants became the first necessities, and when their hospital had been enlarged, when a strong fortress had assumed its protecting position near by, and a few reparations made to the modest chapel, then they commenced to feel at home. "My delight," He has said, "is to dwell with the children of men," and again, His adorable lips had uttered the consoling promise: "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world." How could they remain faint hearted with this life giving assurance, ever present to their memory, and where else could they seek consolation, take rest and shelter, but at His feet, within His Temple? nothing could be consoling or more touching than the spirit of disinterestedness, which characterized the settlers at this time. Through the pious exertions of Mr. de Maisonneuve, a company of soldiers called Our Lady's Guard of Honor was formed. The principal obligation of its members was to watch over the site of Ville-Marie and protect their brother colonists, even at the risks of their own lives. Sister Bourgeoys tells us: "That this company counted sixty-three members, and nothing could be more edifying than their ordinary line of conduct. Each day of the week, some of their number received Holy Communion, and the hour of guard commenced and closed with certain prayers. These pious exercises led them to perform all their actions in a spirit of faith and religion. Still more, when the warwhoop of the sanguinary Iroquois startled them during the hour of guard, they answered valiantly with their own battle cry of 'Ave Purissima.'"

As regards Sister Bourgeoys, she had few or no occasions for exercising her zeal towards youth, as it was impossible to bring up any children for the first eight years. One only,

Jane Loysel, survived and was intrusted to the Sisters care, who took charge of her, from the age of four years up to the time of her marriage.

Other duties, however, devolved upon this heroic woman, and during the early days of Ville-Marie, she was the visible Providence, the guardian spirit of the colony. Among those won to the practice of perfect virtue by her examples and pious insinuations, we take a peculiar pleasure in citing M. de Maisonneuve, the first Governor of Ville-Marie. This gentleman, distinguished for his solid piety, was penetrated with a deep and sincere esteem for Sister Bourgeoys ; he looked upon her, as a person destined by Heaven, to aid him in the accomplishment of the highest maxims of perfection. With the help of her kindly teachings, he was enabled to sustain nobly and constantly the high reputation of sanctity and loyalty, he so justly deserved. His conduct, so frank and disinterested, was at enmity with the slightest desire of self-interest, and he left to the successive Governors of Ville-Marie many noble examples of a perfect disengagement of those means, that might lead to his own personal advantage.

Though Governor of Ville-Marie, he practised evangelical poverty, the most generous and the most absolute ; and considered his own necessities imaginary when the privation afforded relief to others. Aiming still higher, and through a desire to set no bounds to his perfection, he resolved to consecrate himself to God by a vow of perpetual virginity. Heaven blessed his praise worthy determination, and the holy action accomplished, it seemed as if his influence upon the colonists had increased a thousand fold. Each one could testify how nobly and how assiduously, he labored to promote the welfare of the colony. But let us return, dear reader, to the month of December, 1642, the epoch of M. de Maisonneuve's first visit to Ville-Marie. Through the active endeavors of the few brave men who accompanied him, on this occasion, a small fort had been constructed on the shores of the Saint-Lawrence, to serve as a place of refuge, in case of an attack from the Indians. On Christmas eve of this same year, the river, which

had been swollen by incessant rains and snow, began to rise, and overflowing, soon covered its banks and the fields near by. The settlers gathered together in little groups, and gazed with anxious eyes upon the raging element, which threatened to destroy their provisions, their hopes, their lives. At this critical moment, M. de Maisonneuve, surrounded by his men, knelt and in the name of all, he made a promise to Heaven, that if the danger ceased, he would erect a massive cross upon the very summit of the mountain, as a monument of their lasting gratitude.....

A breathless silence ensued as if awaiting an answer from above. The waves still continued their gigantic strides and soon gained the fort, last hope of these stricken men; the threshold of the entrance was flooded, but ere the cry of anguish had escaped their lips, the All-Powerful stretched forth His hand, and the waters subsided. De Maisonneuve knew then, that his prayer had been heard. All hearts were penetrated with the liveliest gratitude, and the festival of the Epiphany, witnessed the accomplishment of his promise. A huge tree, of the choicest wood of the forest, was cut down, and its form moulded into an immense cross, then borne by Mr. de Maisonneuve himself, through ice and snow, and trackless paths, even to Mont-Royal's height; there an altar was raised, the Holy Sacrifice offered, the cross blessed and erected. From that day, the spot became the favorite resort of pious pilgrims. Hereafter, we shall see the Iroquois and the Huron laying aside the tomahawk and the scalping knife at its feet, forgetting there, hereditary hatreds, living together in peace and harmony, uniting their voices in prayer before the common altar of their God.

During the long tedious hours of their sea voyage, Mr. de Maisonneuve had related this incident to Sister Bourgeoys and promised at the same time, to lead her to the spot.

He kept his word, and soon after their arrival in Canada, she was conducted to the mountain, by an escort of thirty men. It was a toilsome journey, for one unaccustomed to the rigors of a Canadian winter, but the fatigue was soon forgotten, when

upon attaining the summit of Mount Royal, they beheld here and there, shattered fragments of the cross destroyed, by the Iroquois, during Mr. de Maisonneuve's absence.

Sister Bourgeoys was sadly disappointed—Still she did not give way to sterile regrets, but with that energy that characterized her, she determined that the cross should stand erect once more, there, where it had first been planted, by the colonists firm and lively faith. Having obtained all the assistance necessary, from M. de Maisonneuve, she returned to the top of the mountain, despite fear and fatigue, and superintended the undertaking, for the space of three days. At the expiration of this time, the sign of man's redemption assumed the cheering and consoling aspect, which speaks to the christian's heart, of those precious and divine attributes, mercy and love. The eagerness with which the settlers complied with Sister Bourgeoys' request on this occasion, proves the high estimation in which she was held by all. Her virtues, her motherly solicitude, her devotedness to the public and private interests of Ville Marie, had gained so complete an ascendancy over the hearts of all, that it would have been impossible to meet with even one, whose views were opposed to hers. She was the guide, the common ~~consolation~~ <sup>comforter</sup>. Ever at her post, when zeal and duty demanded, Sister Bourgeoys could say in the words of the holy man Job, "The ear that heard me, blessed me; "and the eye that saw me, gave witness unto me, because I "delivered the poor, who cried out, and the fatherless, who "had no helper. The blessing of him that was ready to perish, "come upon me, and I comforted the heart of the widow."

.....

If you remember dear reader, at the time of Sister Bourgeoys' departure from France, her attentive friend, Mr. Lecoq, has kindly provided her with many little comforts for her journey. Besides a supply of wholesome food and fresh water, he gave her a bed with the usual appendages. These moderate treasures, were an annoyance to Sister Bourgeoys' spirit of mortification, and consequently, they were soon disposed of, in favor of the needy.

Some time after her arrival in Canada, and long before her constitution was inured to its inclement temperature, a desire to suffer despoiled her of what we would call an essential comfort; and one rough wintry day, a poor soldier shivering with the cold, came and implored her assistance. Though accustomed to fatigue and hardship, the poor man was unable to sleep upon the cold boards, while the delicate woman took there on her sweetest slumbers.

Consequently, the fine mattress, which had been stored away as a useless article, was withdrawn from its hiding place, and bestowed upon the sufferer. Some time after, another soldier, hoping to meet with the same good fortune, made known his wants, and received, the straw bed. The blankets were given to two others, but as no one asked for the pillows, they remained behind, though most probably, they were made use of at a later period, to relieve the wants of some poor unfortunate. Sister Bourgeoys thus deprived voluntarily for the love of God, of every exterior comfort, tasted nevertheless, a perfect repose upon the cold floor, because her heart burned with divine charity, and because, as the author of the Imitation of Christ tells us. "The love of Jesus is noble; it inspires great actions, and excites us to desire perfection in all things." Still more, she proved that she was ever happy to contribute to the comfort of others. Forgetfulness of self, was conspicuous in her every action, and we shall see evidences of this, as we peruse the events, connected with her long and edifying life. Oh! what a mighty power, there is in kindness! An eminent American writer, tells us. "That its laws are stronger than chains or fetters. It is the best of friendly graces, the keenest revenge. "Kindness to one's enemy, is the heaping of coals upon his "head, none are so strong, as to withstand it." And how easy to be kind!

"The simplest and the poorest May  
This simple pittance give,  
And bid delight, to withered hearts,  
Return again and live."



## CHAPTER SIXTH.

*second adieu to the*  
*Sister Bourgeoys work in Canada. Her Return and her*

Four years in Canada.—Happy results of the influence, which Sister Bourgeoys exercised upon the children of the forest.—Mr. de Maisonneuve returns to France.—The Seminary of Saint-Sulpice.—November 25th 1657.—The Iroquois child.—Sister Bourgeoys returns to France with Miss Manse.—The latter visits the tomb of Mr. Olier, founder of the Society of Saint-Sulpice and is miraculously cured.—Sister Bourgeoys once again in Troyes.—A second "Good bye" to France.

Four long years and more had elapsed, since Sister Bourgeoys' arrival in Canada; four long years of patient toil, of heroic abnegation, of untiring zeal. The infant-colony had increased in strength, and the settlers rustic home began to wear a look of ease and comfort. The wigwams of the different tribes were scattered here and there, and though vengeance had been vowed upon the white man's head; still, they approached at times and gazed with anxious curiosity, upon the implements of agriculture and industry, which were to desecrate the wild beauty of their home. Others too, of a softer nature came betimes and following their gentle help-mates, they lingered around the strangers path, listened to his friendly words, returned his kindly smile, entered the humble chapel, and finally subjugated by the irresistible influence that ever pervades its precincts, they knelt too, and prayed to that God, "so ancient and yet so new." Here was an ample field for Sister Bourgeoys' zealous inclinations, and for the space of four years, she labored unceasingly. In her daily rounds from cabin to wigwams she nursed the sick, consoled the sorrowful and instructed the ignorant. With unshrinking faith, she made her way through uncultivated lands and pathless woods, seeking out the poor neglected children of a savage race, imparting to them a knowledge of God's holy religion.

—Ah! was it not a lovely sight to behold this frail, but heroic woman, seated at twilight hour, neath the shade of forest trees? There, surrounded by the family of the red man, she



related the history of a Saviour's love ? Holding up a crucifix before their astonished gaze, she explained the mystery of man's redemption, then pointing to the azure skies above, she described to them the delights of that eternal home, and their savage hearts softened at the touching recital. With the firm step of woman, she entered the wretched hovel despite the repugnances of nature, there, kneeling upon the ground beside some aged chieftain, she smoothed his lonely pillow, by instilling into his mind the principles of our holy faith. With redoubled care and zeal, she trained the Iroquois maiden while her persevering love won her over to the teachings of the Gospel, and, as the desert flower improves in beauty and sheds its fragrance all around, when refreshed by the dews of Heaven, so this wild uncultivated heart, increased daily in softness and virtue, without losing its original simplicity of the woods. This was her pleasure, to cultivate young minds and imbue them with the love of virtue and religion, with sentiments of filial devotion towards that August Mother of God, to whom she was herself so peculiarly devoted.

One of her biographers in speaking of this period of her life says : " Sister Bourgeoys was the worthy coadjutrix of M. de Maisonneuve, and while he was forming a material city for Mary, she was establishing the spiritual reign of that Blessed Mother in the hearts of youth." And thus the colony prospered, zealous hearts were promoting God's glory by the sanctification of its children, an hospital existed for the relief of the sick and the distressed. One thing alone was wanting, the number of God's ministers was inadequate to the wants of the faithful. " A seminary must be established " says a distinguished author, " and the same devotion, which builds Saint Sulpice for Mary in Paris, builds the new Saint Sulpice, three thousand miles away in the colony that bears her name. We read, that when the establishment of Ville Marie was first projected, the members of the Montreal Company, desired to place it at once, under the direction of the Seminary which M. Olier was then founding, in Paris ; but the continued warfare with the Iroquois which had brought the colony,

"more than once, to the brink of destruction, had prevented "their plans from being carried out." Those upon whom the prosperity of the colony reposed, were deeply interested and felt more than once the sad consequences of this delay, hence it was decided in 1655, that M. de Maisonneuve should return to France, and negotiate this affair with the gentlemen who composed the Montreal Company, and in particular with M. Olier, so much the more as the latter's delicate health was a source of constant anxiety to his friends.

M. de Maisonneuve's journey had the desired success, not only as regarded the Seminary, but at the same time, as concerned the Hospitallers of Ville Marie; he solicited strongly in favor of the latter, and prepared the way for four Sisters of Saint Joseph, formed at "La Flèche" by the pious ~~de la~~ Dauversière. A contract was written and signed, which gave these religious liberty to take charge of the Hotel-Dieu Hospital at Ville Marie, as soon as apartments could be prepared to receive them. The Mother House of Saint Sulpice in Paris, furnished priests for the new Seminary of Ville Marie. (1) We

(1) Mother Juchereau, in her "History of the Hôtel-Dieu de Québec," gives us the following details concerning Mr. Souart, one of its founders: "His youth was spent in the whirl of a gay parisian life. Pleasure and wealth were the two aims of his existence. He had chosen his state of life—as men of the fashionable world do—without reflection. Assisting at high mass in the church of Saint-Sulpice, some days previous to his marriage, an accident occurred which was to make known to him the will of God. It was the festival of Our Lady's glorious Assumption, and the clergyman who was to eulogise the Blessed Virgin's coronation as Queen of Heaven, fell suddenly ill at the hour of sermon. Grieved that so large an audience should be deprived of an instruction upon such a day, a sexton was sent around the church to see if among the Priests and Religious present, one could be found to supply the vacant place. He addressed himself to one well known in Paris, and begged that he would ascend the pulpit and speak according to his inspirations. The gentleman accepted, and after a few words on the feast of the day, he was inspired to speak upon the necessity of examining one's vocation. His words made a deep impression upon Mr. Souart, and he thought within himself that he was on the point of a rash undertaking. Extremely agitated, he resolved to consult God in prayer, and for this purpose entered retreat at Saint-Sulpice. Here, the will of God was clearly manifested, and in consequence his marriage engagement broken, and the ecclesiastical state embraced in this same Seminary of Saint-Sulpice. Sent some time afterwards to Canada, he rendered immense service to the colony of Ville-Marie, not only by his works of zeal, but also because of his knowledge of the medical art, which rendered him invaluable to the settlement, there was no other physician for the sick and infirm until some years later. In his old age, he returned to France, and there prepared himself to receive that eternal reward, which is promised to all those who leave father and mother for God's sake."

shall see its members even down to our own day, educating and training, not only the youth of Ville Marie, but also numbers from all parts of the western hemisphere.

It would be no easy task, to describe the joy evinced by the colonists, upon the arrival of these distinguished ecclesiastics. Miss Manse, who had so long anticipated their coming, hastened to prepare an apartment for them in her hospital, and this single room answered the purposes of parlour, sleeping room, refectory and kitchen, until such time as the completion of the new Seminary gave them a home. Heavenly favors seemed to succeed each other. The settlers became more and more attached to a spot, which had been the theatre of so many heroic sacrifices, and when it was announced to them, that nuns were coming from France to take charge of their hospital, their joy was great.

At this same period so fruitful in good works, dates the opening of Sister Bourgeoys' school, the first, ever taught in the district of Montreal. Here, Huron, Iroquois and French Canadian met together, and together lisped the names of Jesus, of Mary, of faith, hope and love.

"Two centuries and more have flown since that thrice happy day,  
And still around us, virtue sheds her mild benignant ray.  
The stream of science, for us still flows, profusely as before;  
Its waters come from that well-spring, our Mothers loved of yore."

But let us turn back, and gaze upon the first humble structure, sanctified by the zealous teachings of Margaret Bourgeoys. Yes, dear reader, more than two hundred years ago, there stood on the sloping banks of the Saint Lawrence, a rough stone stable some thirty six feet long.

This lowly building, the only one at M. de Maisonneuve's disposition, was given to Sister Bourgeoys, with a certain extent of land, and here she continued her apostolic labors, so generously commenced in the forests and on the mountain sides of Ville Marie. Here too, at a later period, she was to found her Congregation, destined the first, to spread throughout the colony, the spirit and the virtues of the Mother of God.

" This stable " Sister Bourgeoys tells us, " was about thirty  
" six feet long, and had served so far, as a place of refuge for  
" animals of every kind ; however we managed to build a  
" chimney, and cleaned out the lower part destined for our  
" school-room. Above this, was a sort of pigeon house, which  
" we converted into a dormitory and sitting-room, but it was  
" extremely inconvenient as the only means of access, was by  
" an outside ladder. We took possession of this habitation,  
" the 25th of November 1657." A young girl, by name Eliza-  
beth Picard, became Sister Bourgeoys' associate and remained  
with her up to the time of her marriage.

Sister Bourgeoys adds : " Here I assembled all the children  
" of the colony, who were capable of being taught." Yes !  
many and precious were the deeds of virtue accomplished,  
within that first humble dwelling where the Congregation of  
Notre Dame, was to receive its birth, and commence its grand  
work of regeneration. How many thrilling memories cluster  
around that spot, cradle of Ville Marie's first religious com-  
munity. The lowly roof, is to us dearer, grander far, than mar-  
ble piles or noble gothic structure, for it was there she lived, it  
was there she toiled, there, she taught her school and kept  
under her immediate protection, the young emigrant girls, who  
came to seek a home in the colony. There too, for the greater  
advantage of a certain number of young persons, who were no  
longer of an age to attend school, she opened an external Con-  
gregation, similar to the one she had herself attended in the  
city of Troyes. These assemblies commenced on the 2nd of  
July, festival of Our Lady's Visitation, 1658, and already the  
name of " The Congregation " was given to her institution.

" This same year ", sister Bourgeoys tells us : " Our modest  
" habitation received an other inmate. There was an Iroquois  
" woman who lived nearby, she had a little girl some nine  
" months old, which was sadly neglected. My companion's  
" heart was touched at the sight of this poor little creature and  
" she prevailed upon me to ask for the child, I did so, but  
" almost certain of meeting with a refusal, it was as I expect-  
" ed. Some time after, however, on her return from the chase

"with other women of her nation, she was prevailed upon to give up the child that it might be cared for. Mr. Souart at this time Curate of Ville Marie, offered her a necklace and other little trinkets much valued by the Indians, and for this paltry sum she ceded her child to others, whose hearts were warm with true christian charity. In this way we gained a soul to God. She was baptized on the 4th of August 1668, feast of Our Lady of the Snows, and received in consequence, the name of her heavenly Protectress. Father Le moine, assures us that this child was the first of the Iroquois tribe, that received the Sacrament of Baptism. Some time after this event, I went to France, and during my absence the child was confided to the care of a woman named Lacroix. In the interval the father came to Ville Marie in hopes of finding her, but unable to discover where she was, he returned to the forest without her. This little girl died at the age of six years in our house. Two others were successively baptized, bore the same name as the first, and died at the same early age."

As we have already remarked Sister Bourgeoys' zeal, was not confined exclusively to the younger portion of the colony, every one of its members, shared her solicitude; and, as a tender mother would scatter blessings around the future pathway of her child, with the same anxious tenderness did she labor for the future welfare of the settlers. Devotion to the Queen of Heaven, must be the guiding star, the life of every heart. The love of Mary was her own dream of happiness and yielding to a strong interior impulse, she resolved to erect at some distance from the settlement, a little chapel in honor of the Mother of God, which would be not only a monument of filial love, but at the same time a rampart and a stronghold to defend the site of Ville Marie. Still more, it would be a place of pilgrimage, a sanctuary, before whose shrine, the desponding and the erring, the pure and the holy, might together kneel, and together, make known their common wants. And as Sister Bourgeoys opened the first school and established the first religious community of Ville Marie, so, the first church

erected in honor of the Mother of God, was due to her zealous efforts. We read, "that when the Montreal Company was first formed, the associates resolved that the first chapel built upon the island of Montreal, should be dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, and even before the establishment of the colony, M. Olier was frequently heard to say : " Oftentimes it occurs to me that God in his infinite mercy, " will one day send me to Ville Marie in Canada, where a " church will be built in honor of his holy Mother and there I " will become Our Lady's Chaplain."

This desire could not be realized at that time on account of the indian hostilities, and for many years a small wooden chapel was the only temple raised in honor of the Most High. Sister Bourgeoys had evidently received a special calling to spread this pure devotion throughout the land, and it would seem that God desired the realization of this pious design, for she was inspired to lay the foundations of the edifice, even before the arrival of the Sulpicians in Montreal. Having obtained from the Jesuit Fathers, who exercised at that time the holy ministry in the colony, all the special permissions, she set to work in the spring of 1657. Her pious desire found an echo in every heart; all were zealous to share in the good work. Some brought wood, others brought stone, while a still larger number came, with willing hearts, strong arms and mechanical skill. The foundations were dug, the first stone laid and blessed, and the little chapel dedicated to "Our Lady of Good Help," or "Bonsecours," as it is better known. This was sufficient for the moment. Circumstances demanded a short delay, and Sister Bourgeoys was happy at the thought of resuming her labor during the autumn of this same year. About this time, Mr. de Maisonneuve returned from France, accompanied by the gentlemen who were to lay the foundations of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice. Desirous of contributing to the good work undertaken by Sister Bourgeoys, Mr. de Maisonneuve had trees felled in the forest, and the humble Governor helped his men to draw them outside the woods, and to prepare them in readiness for the autumn. Sister Bourgeoys had been

fully authorized to commence this good work, still, it would seem that notwithstanding all these energetic preparations, the time fixed by Divine Goodness had not yet arrived, for unforeseen circumstances, prevented the accomplishment of her pious design at this moment. We shall see her later, however, happily realizing this, the dearest wish of her heart.

Some months previous to this event, Miss Manse had met with a sad accident: her arm, which had been broken by a fall on the ice, had become perfectly useless and hopelessly paralysed from want of proper care and attention. She suffered acutely, and her friends advised her to go to France for relief, and at the same time, hasten the departure of the "Hospitalers of La Flèche" for the new Hospital of Ville-Marie. The journey was absolutely necessary and a companion indispensable. Sister Bourgeoys, who had viewed the increasing population with anxious eyes, felt that alone she was unable to supply its wants, and despairing to receive any assistance at that time from the young persons who resided in the colony, she decided upon returning to France, to seek out among her former associates, generous self-sacrificing hearts, capable of continuing the good work she had commenced. Her zealous desires were approved, and preparations were made at once for their departure.

Ever since her arrival in Canada, Sister Bourgeoys had taken charge of the vestry and the altar linen, and this responsibility she never consented to share with any one; consequently, before leaving, she begged permission to continue her charge, upon her return from France. Mr. Galinier, curate of the parish, consented, provided her absence would not be prolonged over a year. She gave her word, and the 14th of October, 1658, saw them on the deep, homeward bound, if home there was, for them here below. After a safe and pleasant journey, despite the feeble health and broken arm, they saw themselves once more upon the friendly shores of their native land.

It was the festival of the Epiphany, 1659

Sister Bourgeoys tells us, that when they arrived in France,



Miss Manse was suffering so acutely from her arm, that she was unable to bear the movement of the conveyance, which was to transport her from La Rochelle to La Flèche, in consequence she was borne upon a litter. A few days later, they were in Paris, where Miss Manse intended to visit the Superior of Saint-Sulpice as well as other members of the Montreal Company, and represent to them her inability to render the slightest service in favor of the Hospital, and endeavor to procure the Sisters of Saint-Joseph to replace her, they having been chosen by Mr. Olier before his death. All this she accomplished. The members of the Company, listened attentively, and being themselves eye witnesses to the sad state, for which there seemed but slight relief, they manifested their compassion in every possibly way. Skilful and experienced surgeons were consulted, but having examined her arm, they declared that there was no human remedy. The skin presented the appearance of a piece of prepared leather, the arm and hand without movement, deprived of all natural heat, and but just enough of sensibility left to cause pain, whenever it was touched. After this declaration, Miss Manse, convinced that human art would be of no avail, acting upon inspiration, resolved to go and pray upon Mr. Olier's tomb. Her kind friend, Sister Bourgeoys accompanied her to the Seminary, but being unable to accomplish their pious project at this moment, the friends separated. Miss Manse remained with one of her sisters in Paris, while Sister Bourgeoys proceeded onwards to Troyes.

It is not without feelings of emotion, that one revisits his native land, particularly when the absence has been prolonged for a lapse of years. What must it have been for Sister Bourgeoys when she entered her native city? There, almost every spot was sacred to her, hallowed by some sweet recollection to memory dear. She never told what her feelings were upon this occasion, but no doubt the throbbing emotions of her sensitive loving heart, were stilled by the power of that mighty word, Sacrifice! She simply relates what concerned Miss Manse, and a few other details relative to those who were to accompany



her on her return to Canada. "The Sunday after my arrival in Troyes," she writes, "I received a letter from Miss Manse stating that she had been miraculously cured through the merits of M. Olier, her own hand writing was the most convincing proof." Grateful beyond expression for the great favor received, these two devoted souls set to work each in her way, for the advantage of the little colony left beyond the western waves. Miss Manse, exerting herself in every possible way, to procure the Sisters of Saint Joseph for her hospital, Sister Bourgeoys seeking out in her native city, generous young persons, to assist her in the sanctification of the youthful colony. "Once more in Troyes" writes Sister Bourgeoys, "I remained with my former friends, the religious of the Congregation. To these I made known my intention, of taking back with me to Canada, to share my occupations, two or three young girls, who were strong, healthy and virtuous. Mr. Raisin, the father of one of my young friends, was at this time on a visit to the city of Troyes, hearing me speak thus, he advised me to pray well, so that more than one generous young heart might be inspired to follow me. "He returned to Paris, little thinking that his only daughter would be the first to offer herself. Miss Raisin entreated me accept of her as a companion, but I was unwilling to make any promise, before she herself acquainted her father of her determination. Soon after, two others joined us, they were Miss Anny Châtel and Catherine Crolo. Taking leave of our friends, we started for Paris, where Miss Raisin did her utmost to obtain her father's consent. I could not but admire the truly christian spirit which animated the parents of my young friends. Mr. Châtel in particular loved his daughter with all a father's tenderness, and when confiding her to my care, he enquired with loving solicitude, "How we intended to live in Canada." I showed him the contract which put me in possession of the stable, given by M. de Maisonneuve. "So far for the lodging" he answered, "But what other inducement do you offer to those who accompany you? What means of subsistence have you?" I replied that I could only give

"them bread and soup, and promise them, toils, privations and humiliations. The fond father's eyes were suffused with tears at these words, but unwilling to oppose the designs of Heaven, he said through his tears, "Take my child", then passing into his study, he signed the paper, which attested that his daughter engaged herself to live with me, and assist me in teaching the children of Ville Marie. Then, after providing every essential comfort for his daughter's journey, Mr. Châtel had a hundred and fifty livres in gold sewed up in her corset, and commanded her to keep this secret, so that, should she fall victim to loneliness or disgust, she could easily return home. In a word, he did all that a devoted father could do, to lighten the sacrifice of leaving France. He wrote to the most considerable posts along the route, saying that if his daughter required any assistance either going or coming, to give it freely in his name.

"Miss Raisin had more difficulty in obtaining her father's consent. He not only forbade her to leave France, but even refused to admit her into his presence. She prayed and entreated until finally conquered by her tears and supplications, he gave his consent, and signed her engagement with me in a manner similar to the others. This done, Mr. Raisin gave the sum of a thousand francs to defray the expenses of the journey. I accepted three hundred and returned the rest; but every year Mr. Raisin sent us a certain amount upon the seven hundred which I had refused, and after his death, his son who was an Advocate in Parliament, continued this same kindly act. To the three companions already obtained, was added a fourth, known later as Sister Hioux, and the first received as a professed Sister in the Community of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, Ville-Marie."

Sister Bourgeoys gives no other details relative to her stay in Paris, though we feel assured that many interesting incidents must have marked her arrival, sojourn and departure. The curiosity excited by the novelty of her enterprise was in itself a subject to be pondered on. Those who before had deemed her undertaking rash and extravagant, and who had openly blamed

her proceedings, now viewed things in another light and evinced in every possible way, their deep interest and warm admiration. Ever humble in her thoughts and in her words, Sister Bourgeoys never made any allusion to the consideration she enjoyed in the hearts of all. She cared not for the honors nor the esteem of the world, neither did she fear its frowns. What she did, was done for God alone, and she could not look back upon the world's proffered esteem and muse upon the success which accompanied her undertakings. We read however, that during this visit to France, a wealthy nobleman member of the Montreal Company, singularly edified by Sister Bourgeoys' zeal and devotedness, offered her a rich dotation so as to insure a certain revenue to her little community, but the good Sister refused to receive it, fearing that too much ease, would be prejudicial to the spirit of poverty which she faithfully cherished and which she wished, above all things, to bequeath to her religious family.

In all, her journey to Paris had proved a most successful one, and thanking God for the favors that had accompanied it, she bade an affectionate farewell, to her native city, and started for "La Rochelle," with the heroic young girls, who had so generously consented to share her toils and privations. Once again the signal for departure. It was the 29th of June 1659. There were two hundred persons on board the vessel. One hundred and ten of which were destined for Ville-Marie. Here Sister Bourgeoys met with the Sisters of Saint Joseph, who were to accompany Miss Manse to Canada, for the purpose of taking charge of her hospital there. Two gentlemen of Saint Sulpice, Mr. Le Muistre and Mr. Vignal, both of whom were to leave their crimson records in the Annals of Ville Marie. The members of Saint Sulpice in Paris, who had ever been so deeply interested in the infant colony, went to considerable expense at this time, to procure and fit out a certain number of young persons of both sexes, who were to go and establish themselves at Ville-Marie. There were about sixty young men and about half that number of young women who were confided to Sister Bourgeoys' care. She bestowed every motherly

attention upon them, not only during the long sea voyage, but even after they had reached Ville Marie, as the sequel will show.

Contradictions and humiliations always come unlooked for. "At La Rochelle," we are told," a certain number of persons, "who were opposed to the advancement of the Colony were "the cause of many personal affronts, many painful incidents to "our travellers. But their submission, their meek acceptance of these crosses, could not, but draw down special blessings from above. Every endeavor was made to prevent the Sisters of Saint Joseph from leaving the shores of France.

Then again, the captain of the vessel, influenced by false reports, would not allow them to embark, unless they paid in advance, the expenses of the journey which amounted to about 20,000 livres. To these contradictions, so trying at the moment, was added a sojourn of three months at "La Rochelle" besides the indispensable obligations of supporting during this time one hundred and ten persons. Sister Bourgeoys, refers to these mishaps in her memoirs, and says ~~At~~ "That the gold "which she received from Miss Raisin at this time was a providential relief to all. Our passage," she adds, "had been "promised for fifty livres each, provisions and baggage included, "but when the time to leave came, the Captain demanded "175 livres and we had no money. Mr. de Maisonneuve's "credit was of no avail, and this man insisted that Miss "Raisin should return to Paris and procure the amount. This "was to me a source of extreme annoyance, but finally after "much trouble and many entreaties, we succeeded in making "this man understand, that every thing would be arranged to "his entire satisfaction; relying on our promises, he consented "to raise anchor and leave. It was the festival of Our Lady's "Visitation the 2nd of July, this same year 1659, that the "vessel took her westward course, laden with consolations for "the Colony of Ville-Marie.

"Go, in thy glory, o'er the western seas,  
Take with thee gentle winds thy sails to swell,  
Sunshine and joy upon thy streamers be,  
Fare thee well Bark! fare thee well."

"A long farewell, thou wilt not bring us back,  
All, whom thou bearest far from home and hearth,  
Many are thine, whose steps no more shall track,  
Their own sweet native earth."

## CHAPTER SEVENTH.

Once more upon the Ocean.—~~Incidents connected with the voyage.—~~  
~~The impressions which the view of their future home, produced~~  
~~upon Sister Bourgeoys' young companions.~~ ~~How the settlers hailed~~  
their arrival.—The Sulpician martyrs.—Visible protection of Heaven, upon the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame.

The vessel, in which our travellers sailed, was called, the "Saint Andrew." It had served for the sick, more than two years during the war, and many had found upon this "floating hospital," the relief which only death can give. No quarantine had been made, in consequence, a pestilential disease soon broke out among the passengers, and the first days of the journey, were marked by nine or ten deaths.

Mr. LeMaistre, took charge of the sick, and when all was over, he wrapt them up in their winding sheets, and stood by, when they were consigned to their watery grave. Among the victims, were two French calvinists, in whose favor, the hour of mercy dawned ; they had the happiness of abjuring the errors of their youth, and died in the bosom of that church, who receives all who come, even at the eleventh hour. Sister Bourgeoys was not the last to render service, in these sad circumstances. Special blessings seemed to accompany her, and while those around fell exhausted, she seemed endowed with super-human strength. Her young companions were very ill, and Miss Manse almost reduced to the extremity. But sickness was not their only trial, furious tempests assailed their ship, and kept them in continual danger of perishing. Amid these apparent ills, their's was that virtue which looks calmly on misfortune, thoroughly convinced that they were in God's keeping, that His power could make the calm succeed the storm, they adored Him and blessed Him, in sunshine and in darkness.

"There, was courage in fragile form  
Faith, trusting to the last.  
Prayer breathing heavenward thro' the storm,  
But all alike have passed."

(HEMANS.)

The tedious sea voyage was over, and as the 8th of September ushered in Our Lady's Nativity, the Saint Andrew cast anchor before Quebec. It would indeed be a pleasing task dear reader, could we recount in detail the different circumstances of their arrival. Could we describe the feelings of these voluntary exiles, who came, led on by their spirit of faith and zeal, to do something in the glorious cause of God, upon these western shores.

Sister Bourgeoys' youthful companions in particular excite our curiosity and call for our warmest admiration. We would fain know, what pictures their fancy wrought up, as they neared the shores of their future home, and compared the beauties of uncultivated nature to the splendors and magnificence of their own fair France.

What thought they of the forest child? Did not the seeming dreariness of the far off vista, fill their young hearts with sad forebodings, and cause their thoughts to wander back instinctively to the loved ones left behind? Did not some fond reminiscence, break in upon their feelings, and lead them to sigh and to say: "Do they miss me at home?" And perchance the passing breeze whispered back, "We miss thee at home, yes, we miss thee; and the imaginary echo, may have been to them, the sweetest of earthly consolations. We know not what they felt, perhaps, they dared not linger with these loved memories, for there are things.

"We must throw from us, when the heart would gather  
Strength to fulfil its settled purposes."

Like the noble woman, by whose side they knelt, they had left the shores, where christianity shed its brightest beams, and scattered its richest blessings, and with her they came, animated by the same single hearted, pure, unselfish love, to make God known to hearts, that knew him not. After spending some



days in Quebec to recruit their strength, the 29th of this same month. saw them in sight of Ville Marie.

"We reached Ville Marie the 29th of September," writes Sister Bourgeoys. "And I could not but admire the goodness of God. Before leaving, I had requested Mr. Galinier to keep my office in the vestry until I came home, he promised to do so, provided I was not more than a year away, and here notwithstanding all the contradictions we encountered, despite the accidents that befell us, I came back the same day and about the same hour as when I left. X Happy were the Colonists when news came of their safe arrival ! and why should they not rejoice ? Old acquaintances had come to share their toils, and all had received "good news from home." In truth, the voyage had been of immense advantage to the colony. A recruit of strong, healthy men, for its defence, experienced nuns to take charge of the Hôtel-Dieu, generous young hearts who were to assist Sister Bourgeoys in her praise worthy exertions, and finally two zealous Sulpicians who were to devote themselves heart and soul, for the common weal.

The settlement of Ville-Marie numbered at this period about one hundred and sixty-two families, more than forty dwellings situated for mutual defence, an hospital, a fort, a mill, and last but not least, the humble little chapel of the Hôtel-Dieu, the most precious of all their treasures ; thither our travellers wended their way to offer up their hymn of thanksgiving, to beg assistance and strength from Him, whose love incites to noble deeds and who recompenses, even the efforts made. Sister Bourgeoys and her companions, all required strength and counsel from above, for many a toilsome, difficult task awaited them. Events of deep interest to all had transpired during the interval of absence. As we have already remarked, it had been proposed from the very beginning of the colony, to establish religion upon a solid footing, by procuring every necessary advantage to the infant church. The most essential, no doubt, was the erection of an Episcopal See. This heavy responsibility fell to the lot of ~~Mr.~~ *they* de Laval, of the noble house of Montmorency ; but better



known as "L'Abbé de Montigny," who at the time of his nomination, was archdeacon of Evreux. An appeal was made to the Holy Father; the Court of France, made known its desires, and without further delay, the Bulls were sent, which gave to *Father* Mr. de Laval the commission of Apostolic Vicar in Canada, with the title of Bishop in *partibus* de Pétrée. He sailed for his far off mission soon after his promotion, and reached Quebec in the month of June, this same year, 1659. He was received with every possible mark of distinction, as became the first Bishop of Canada.

"Trials," it is said, "never come alone." It was now Sister Bourgeoys' hour to take up her cross, for contradictions came in swift succession. Tentatives had already been made to establish the Sister Ursulines of Québec at Ville-Marie, but without success, as the same obstacle which prevented the execution of this design, in 1653, still existed in 1659. "We are strongly urged," writes Mother Mary of the Incarnation, "to establish a house of our order in Montreal, but it is not in our power to do so, for want of funds." And this want of pecuniary resources, which is the principal obstacle to one foundation, becomes the basis and the ground work for another: convincing proof that "unless God builds the house, they labor in vain that build it." The Ursulines, considered a foundation incompatible with the poverty of the place, and Sister Bourgeoys, in a spirit of disengagement never surpassed and rarely equalled, commences her institution, which she endows at the price of sacrifices and humiliations. It was her special mission.

To these apprehensions, succeeded anxieties and fears of every kind for the welfare of the colony, and each moment seemed to bring Ville-Marie nearer to the brink of ruin. Then came alarms, because of the invasions and the depredations of the Iroquois; so far, the settlers had contented themselves, with defending their homes and their lands; but hostilities became so frequent, that it was deemed necessary to pursue the common enemy as far back as the forests, and by this means, keep them at bay. The colonists prepared for this action, by

a fervent reception of the Sacraments, and promising before the altar, that they would accept of no quarter from their enemies, but struggle until their latest breath, in defence of Mary's city, and the loved ones there. This done, they put all their temporal affairs in order, then said a last "Good bye" to their fellow citizens, and ascended the Saint Lawrence, in their little barks, to meet the enemy, and shed their blood for God and for their homes.

A cruel conflict ensued, 800 Iroquois were completely mastered by 17 of the settlers, for the space of eight days, at the end of which time, their valor and intrepidity, inspired terror for the name of Montreal, and their lives so nobly sacrificed in its defence, saved all Canada.

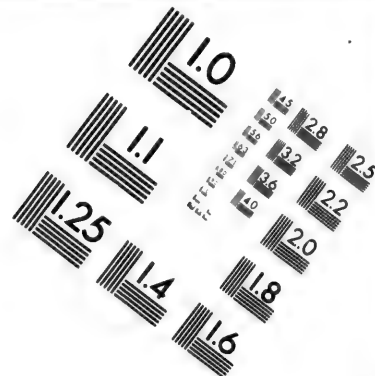
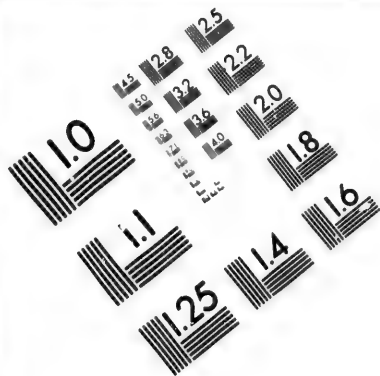
They fell,

Ah! who dies in vain,  
Upon his country's war field, and within  
The shadow of the Altar! I tell thee,  
That the voice of noble blood  
Thus poured, for faith and freedom, hath a tone  
Which from the night of ages, from the gulf  
Of death shall burst, and make its high appeal  
Sound unto earth and Heaven. Immortal seed,  
Deep by heroic suffering hath been sown  
On all her ancient hills: and generous hope  
Knows that the soil, in its good time shall yet  
Bring forth a glorious harvest. Earth receives  
Not one red drop, from faithful hearts, in vain.

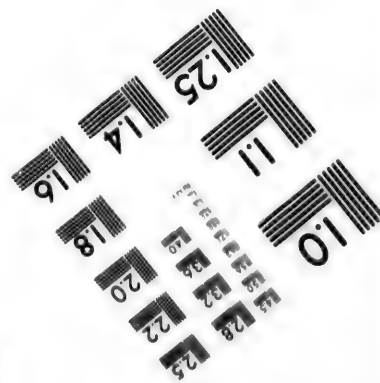
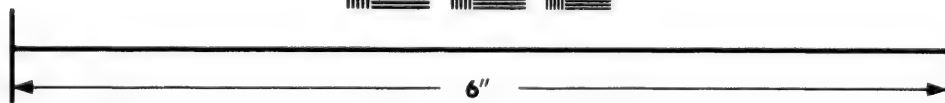
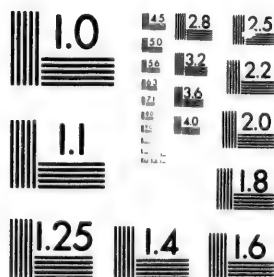
(HEMANS.)

Sister Bourgeoys in relating these details, lays before us at the same time, the harrowing circumstances of ~~M.~~ Le Maistre's death. When the illustrious founder of Saint Sulpice, proposed this far off mission, to his ecclesiastics, not one evinced more eagerness, than the worthy priest, whose death was even then predicted, by the prophetic Olier. "Send me to Canada" he said, "and once there, I will seek out these savages and live among them!" "You will not be obliged to seek them out," continued his holy Superior, "they will come of themselves, and so surround you, that escape will be impossible."

And so it was. But let us listen, dear reader, to Sister Bourgeoys' narration:



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" It was the 29th of August, 1661.—After having celebrated  
 " the ' Holy Sacrifice ', Mr. Le Maistre took a certain number  
 " of domestics from the Seminary with him, and went to Saint  
 " Gabriel's farm, situated at some distance from the settlement.  
 " It was harvest time, and the indians were aware of this, con-  
 " sequently they concealed themselves in an ambuscade. ~~Mr.~~ *Fatal*  
 " Le Maistre, stood sentinel at some distance from where the  
 " workmen were employed, so as to warn them, at the slightest  
 " approach of danger.

" The Iroquois, seeing him in this position, crept stealthily  
 " around, and falling upon him suddenly, killed him with their  
 " fire-arms.

" She adds, " It was the festival of the Decollation of Saint  
 " John the Baptist. The Iroquois after severing his head from  
 " his body, rolled it up in his pocket-handkerchief, and carried  
 " it away with them (1). We were told that the features of the  
 " holy man were engraved so deeply and so distinctly upon  
 " this handkerchief, that he could be easily recognized by any  
 " one. Some time later, as I was on the point of starting for  
 " France, it came into my mind that I should ascertain the  
 " truth of this fact, before making it known. One of the work-  
 " men, who was taken prisoner with ~~Mr.~~ Le Maistre and  
 " afterwards released, minus his fingers, told me that he could  
 " swear to the truth of this assertion, not from having heard it  
 " said, but from having looked with his own eyes, upon the  
 " marvellous representation. He made every possible promise  
 " to these barbarians, so as to obtain this precious portrait, but  
 " in vain, they would accept of no price and declared that they  
 " would never give it up, that it was a glorious trophy, which  
 " would render them invincible in war." " But what is more

(1) The Indian who gave the fatal blow to Mr. Le Maistre, by name  
 Thierly Hondoron, was sometime afterwards, converted to christianity  
 by the prayers, no doubt, of the martyred sulphician; convinced that  
 he would find in the priests of the Seminary, benefactors and fathers,  
 he placed himself under their direction in the mission of the moun-  
 tain. He gave his daughter Marie, to Sister Bourgeoys that she might  
 be instructed in the principles of our holy faith; later, he married  
 her to a frenchman who was employed among the domestics of the  
 Seminary. The old indian entertained for the worthy priests who  
 had taken pity on him, the deepest sentiments of respect and grati-  
 tude, up to his last moments.

"remarkable still" write the Sisters of Saint Joseph, to their "friends in France, "the handkerchief remained perfectly "white, free from spot or stain, while the features of the holy "priest were impressed upon it, as of fine white wax. Upon "seeing this, the Indians were terrified, and said to each "other: "This man must have been a great demon." The "Indians were so strangely impressed by these circumstances, "that they dared not retain it any longer, and it was accord- "ingly sold to the English. One of the Jesuit Fathers tried to "obtain it from the latter, but did not succeed, as the Iroquois "had menaced them severely, if they did so."

Two months later, his companion and fellow laborer, Mr. Vignal, followed in the same bloody path. He was cruelly massacred by the Indians the 25th of October following.

Leading his men to a certain island at some distance from Ville-Marie, to collect stone for the purpose of completing the Seminary, he was attacked by the Indians who were lying in ambush on this island. They pierced his body through and through, then when they had vented their rage upon him, his body, which was too mutilated to be taken away with them, was destined to serve for their repast. Consequently his flesh was roasted and eaten by the sanguinary Iroquois.

"We flattered ourselves" write the Sisters of Saint Joseph. "That Mr. Vignal would continue to be our director for many "years to come. But God, has ordained things otherwise; "he was destined to walk in the traces of Mr. Le Maistre, not "satisfied with taking away his life, the Iroquois roasted his "remains and ate them. This circumstance is afflicting for all "his friends, but doubly so for us." Notwithstanding these scenes so often spread before the settlers' gaze, the colony strengthened and increased, though it required superhuman energy, and boundless confidence in God, to dwell at this time in the infant city of Ville-Marie: a time, when to brave the open air, was almost to expose one's life. Every revengeful feeling, that savage animosity could arouse, was called forth to action, and they viewed with deep hatred the success that attended the white man's endeavors; success, which was to

drive them from their forest homes, from the soil, of which they had been so long the undisputed masters. Persevering in their vindicative attempts to destroy the colony, they lurked unceasingly around the settler's home, lying in ambush for many successive days, so as to surprise those whom necessity compelled to leave their habitations. Those who came to win their souls to God, ever indulged the fond hope, that one day, the regenerating waters would lave their dark brows, and for this reason, they allowed them at times to approach their settlement. This condescension was too often abused, when those who treated them kindly, relied too much upon their seeming friendship. Sister Bourgeoys tells us, "that on one occasion, shelter had been given in a barn at some distance from their dwelling, to a number of indians of the Huron tribe, who had been converted to christianity. Others of the Iroquois nation, who were seemingly on friendly terms, came soon after and had with them a common lodging. During the night however, the Iroquois massacred all the others with the exception of two little girls, who succeeded in running away. It was a fearful sight, to look upon all these mutilated bodies."

It was at this time, and 'mid scenes like these, that Sister Bourgeoys commenced her glorious undertaking of founding an institution destined to imitate in all things our holy Mother's life here below. Faith, in the assurance given, that her heavenly protectress would never abandon her, gave her strength to perform her Divine Master's will.

"God's love

Hath given her nobler being, made her heart  
A home for all the deep sublimities,  
Of heavenly impulses."

And her young companions, who had forsaken so freely and so generously, their fair homes in yon sunny clime, what said they, when the red man's yells rolled out on the midnight air, and sent their life's blood quivering through their veins? What said they, when the scalping knife reeking with its victim's blood, whizzed through the air, and warned them that the work of



destruction was nigh. What said they? What says the desert flower to the thunder's roar, to the lightning's flash? Ah! their fearless hearts, were raised above earthly terrors, they listened to sweet echoes from the Psalmist, whose sounds fell up on their ear, far clearer than the indians' terrific shouts. "His truth shall compass thee, as with a shield; thou shalt not be afraid for the terror of the night, for the arrow that flieth in the day, for the plague that walketh in darkness. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee." (Psalmist, xc).

They were indeed in God's own keeping, for these ferocious children of the forest, lurked incessantly around their dwelling and sought by a thousand stratagems to do them harm; their efforts all proved vain, and from the commencement of the colony even to our own day, it has never been heard that a Sister of the Congregation, received injury or insult from the red man's child. Ever since the early days of Ville-Marie, they have followed the Sister missionaries, whose lot has been cast among them; and often times in their moods of sullen waywardness, when none others dared approach, the gentle tones of a Sister, to whom they always give the name of mother, has succeeded in recalling serenity to the dusky brow. Nay, a simple glance, has again and again, made known to them the path of duty.

## CHAPTER EIGHTH.

~~Mr. de Maisonneuve's hour of trial; his recompense.~~ Devotion to the Holy Family.—Sister Morin, annalist of the Hôtel-Dieu.—Mr. de Maisonneuve returns to Paris.—Eleven years after his departure from Canada.—The Marquis de Tracy, and suite.—His magnificent escort.—Governor de Courcelles, and the Iroquois children.—Marie Magdalena Nachatal.

We read, "that the father of Themistocles, pointing out one day to his young son, an old and disabled galley, that was lying on the sea shore, said to him: 'My son', it is thus, that people treat those, who have rendered them service, when they have no further need of their assistance." This strange, and too ordinary requital, for years of faithful service, was now to be exemplified in the person of Mr. de Maisonneuve, the first Governor of Ville-Marie, at the close of twenty-two years devotedness to the colony. It was in the month of June 1664, that he was replaced by "Sieur de la Touche," and received orders to return to France. We shall not enter into any details concerning this event, but simply extract from our household annals, a few words of praise, to the memory of a devoted Benefactor. His crosses were borne in silence and humility, while his naturally gay and happy disposition, remained unruffled by the storms of adversity. "His constance was unequalled; and things that would easily tend, to dishearten or rouse a man's angry feelings, were to him a source of joy. His great spirit of faith, led him to find happiness everywhere, even in his disgrace. In these painful moments, he visited Mother de Brezoles, superior of the Hotel-Dieu, and Sister Bourgeoys." These two holy women felicitated him, upon these rude favors, and expressed their satisfaction to see him worthy to walk in the footsteps of his Divine Master. Consequently he returned to France, that he might retire from the world, and bury in obscurity, his name, his glory, and even the remem-

brance of the wrongs he had endured. On this occasion, he proved by his truly forgiving spirit, that,

"When streams of unkindness, as bitter as gall,  
Bubble up from the heart to the tongue,  
And meekness is writhing in torment and thrall,  
By the hand of ingratitude wrung,  
In the heat of injustice, unkind and unfair,  
While the anguish is fostering yet.  
None, none, but a christian, can ever declare,  
I now, can forgive and forget."

Mr. de Maisonneuve returned to Paris, where he lived enjoying a pension, given him by the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. The colonists were thrown into the deepest consternation, but none felt the blow more acutely than Sister Bourgeoys, for none could give a higher appreciation to his conduct, so loyal, so virtuous and so just. Mother Juchereau, in her history of the Hôtel-Dieu of Quebec, writes, "This nobleman was a most devout servant of Our Blessed Lady, to whom he had consecrated himself, by a vow. He was the father and the protector of those he governed, and all those, to whom misfortune had refused a home, found one in his hospitable mansion. As Governor of Ville-Marie, he often times received little presents, from the indians and from others, but he reserved nothing for himself, all was distributed among his soldiers, or the poor of the city. During the long years of his active service in the colony, he had acquired universal esteem, particularly during the Iroquois war, where his valor and intrepidity, won the admiration of all. We read in a record of the times, that he had amassed no wealth in Canada, all that he received was in favor of the large family, he loved so devotedly. In resigning his position and his title, he had but the testimony of his conscience, to bear away with him; even the sum of 6,000 *livres* *prouds* that was due, he bequeathed to the poor of the Hôtel-Dieu. He was happy and contented, to think that he had consecrated the best part of his days, to the foundation of Ville-Marie, and that his life had been a thousand times exposed, for the honor and the service of his God." None perhaps of those who had resided in Montreal, could have given more accurate accounts

of general events in Canada, than Mr. de Maisonneuve ; his appreciation of men and circumstances, would have been not only enlightened, but at the same time wise and impartial. But he wrote nothing, through a spirit of christian charity for those, whose sentiments and manner of acting, were not altogether without reproach. For God alone, he had sacrificed his life, the divine approbation, was all he coveted.

Notwithstanding the unpleasant circumstances, connected with his departure from Ville-Marie, his affection for Canada, never diminished. He remained ever attached to this country, his body was in France, his heart with those who had shared his toils and his dangers, those, whom he called his children well beloved, and his joy was unbounded, when any of them visited his modest retreat in Paris. He spent the remaining eleven years of his life, in preparing for his final departure from this world ; God, who had blessed his public life, reserved special benedictions for his last moments. He died in Paris, the 9th of September 1676, in the sentiments of perfect calm, peace and hopeful joy. When the news of this sad event reached Ville-Marie, it was keenly felt, by all who knew him, by all who had been the objects of his love and solicitude. The Sisters of the Congregation in particular, who had so many reasons to mourn his loss, and cherish his remembrance, persuaded Sister Bourgeoys when she returned to France in 1679, to bring back with her, his old domestic, who had been so devoted to his cause, and who had clung to him in the time of trial and disgrace. Louis Frin was too happy to end his days, in the midst of those, whom his master had loved as his own soul. The memory of Mr. de Maisonneuve has always been and is still in singular veneration, not only in the Mother House of Ville-Marie, but in every branch of the institution, and it is for this reason that we have given these few details, concerning a cherished benefactor of the Congregation, an intimate and devoted friend of its venerable foundress.

While these different events were transpiring, the pious confraternity of the " Holy Family " so rich in edifying details was established. This devotion which grew and strengthened with

the Colony, has been transmitted from father to son, even down to our own day.

+ The laudable project of consecrating the country to the "Holy Family" was first formed by the members of the Montreal Company. We read: "In the month of February, 1642, Mr. Olier having assembled the members of the society in the church of Notre Dame in Paris, offered up the August Sacrifice at Mary's Altar, and consecrated Montreal and the entire territory to Jesus, Mary and Joseph, under the special protection of the ever Blessed Virgin Mary, to whom they resigned the sovereignty and domain of their lands. They declared that the first and principal settlement there, should bear the name of Ville-Marie. God could not but bless the purity of their intentions." The better to succeed in their undertaking, they resolved that the three primitive communities of Ville-Marie, should be dedicated in a special manner to one of these holy persons, the Sulpicians whose direct aim is to represent Our Divine Lord, the Congregation of Notre Dame destined to imitate in a special manner, the Blessed Virgin's life here below, the Sisters of Saint Joseph especially formed to honor the foster father of Our Lord. Sister Bourgeoys speaks in her memoirs of having signed the act, with Miss Manse, and Mother Macé of the Hôtel Dieu. "Our first Superiors" says Sister Morin in her Annals, "were closely bound in holy friendship, with Sister Bourgeoys and her companions, they were the well-loved daughters of the most holy Virgin, and we the children of Saint Joseph, which gives us the inestimable privilege of belonging to the most Holy Family." To induce every member of the Colony to imitate, in some way, these divine models, a second object was given to this devotion. This was to reach the three estates of manhood, womanhood and childhood. The men took Saint Joseph for their patron, the women Our Blessed Lady, and children were to imitate the Infant Jesus. The inhabitants of Ville-Marie, hastened to have their names enrolled as members of the Confraternity. This devotion took its birth at Ville-Marie, through the simultaneous concourse of these three

primitive communities, from thence it spread to Quebec, and through the active endeavors of Madam d'Ailleboust, the rules of the society, were approved of, by Bishop de Laval, March 1665. His Lordship took a deep interest in the progress and development of this devotion. It was on this occasion, that he finally allowed the first novice of the Hôtel Dieu, to pronounce her vows.

"I shall not fail," writes his Lordship, "to pray to the 'Holy Family' for our good Sister Morin (r), that her

(1) Sister Morin, whose name occurs so frequently in this little work, was born in an honorable family of the city of Quebec, in the year 1649. When the Sisters of Saint Joseph came from France in 1659, to take charge of the Hospital of Ville-Marie, the young girl, or rather the child, felt within herself a strange desire to join them. It would seem that a wish to shed her blood, like the martyrs of old, was the motive of a resolution so generous and so extraordinary, Ville-Marie at this time, was the boulevard of French colonists in Canada, the principal theatre of savage warfare and cruelty. This desire, so vehement in a child of eleven years, was considered the effect of indiscreet fervor, and pardonable because of a child's inexperience. Time proved however, that the inspiration came from Heaven. The youthful Marie, persisting in her resolution, her parents finally consented, that she should leave her home for Ville-Marie. There was a touching expression of devotedness and faith, in so heroic a step. His Lordship, Bishop de Laval, manifested a desire to see the child, and satisfied with her answers, he kindly sent her himself to the Sisters of Saint Joseph. Of a most pleasing exterior, gifted with a fine intelligence and many endearing qualities, she had left her happy home and friends, to live in the company of three aged nuns, share their privations and the rude labors of each day. In return, the Sisters endeavored to smooth the thorny path, upon which she had entered. Young as she was, Sister Morin was thought worthy, to embrace the cross of her Divine Saviour. Twice was the young aspirant, brought to the gates of death, by violent maladies, and when restored to health, it was only to become a prey to temptations of disgust for her vocation. For four long years, she was alone in the novitiate, and the gravity of her aged companions made a strange contrast with the sprightly little novice, just entering her teens. Many heavy trials came in turn, painful feelings, against which she struggled for the space of three years. The storm passed away at last, calm and happiness, were restored to her heart. As we have already remarked, it was after the establishment of the confraternity of the Holy Family, that Bishop de Laval allowed Sister Morin to pronounce her vows. "I see nothing, he writes to Mr. Sonart, that can now prevent Sister Morin from consecrating herself entirely to God. Receive her vows in our name, according to the power and authority, with which we invest you. We shall not fail to recommend her to the Holy Family. Ask her to pray for me, and to obtain mercy for my soul, through the intercession of this same Holy Family." The month of March following brought the happy day. A scene so novel, created great sensation at Ville-Marie. All the pomp that could be displayed, was brought forth on this occasion. The little church of the Hôtel-Dieu, was thronged to overflowing and who knows but some dark eyed maiden, in her picturesque attire, with her Iroquois Mother, joined the crowd, and that the more timid Huron or Algonquin, looked on in the distance, wondering what all this meant. Be



sacrifice may be perfect and entire ".....

Louis the XIV, yet in the beginning of his glorious reign, annoyed by the troubles and misunderstandings that were continually taking place in the colony, resolved to investigate matters closely; for this purpose, he made choice of men, distinguished for their moral worth and high intellectual capacity, and placed the government of the colony in their hands. In the month of March, 1660, he named the Marquis of Tracy Vice-Roy, and upon him devolved the responsibility of visiting the french colonies in America. Mr. de Courcelles was invested with the title and authority of Governor-General, and Mr. Talon named Vice-Gerant of the Colony. These officers were wholly devoted to the interests of His Majesty, and exerted themselves nobly in the common cause. Mr. Talon, in particular, contributed so efficaciously to the general good, that his praise was on every tongue.

.....  
We read, in an ancient record, the following description of the Vice-Roy's arrival in this country: "The Marquis de Tracy reached Quebec, the last day of June, 1665. The citizens had contemplated a grand reception, but were disappointed, as the Marquis absolutely refused this honor, and contented himself with the joyous acclamations that resounded on all sides, and to which he responded with the smiling approbation of a father. The chiming of the bells invited him to the little church, where Bishop de Laval, in his pontifical robes, and assisted by his clergy, received him. He

that as it may, the youthful novice, seemed anpremlly happy. Mother Macé and her companions, unable to take charge of the singing, exacted by the ceremonial, made known their embarrassment to Sister Bourgeois. Not even on this occasion, did the worthy foundress of the Congregation, fail to be of assistance, ever ready to oblige, to share with others, the rich natural advantages she possessed, and assisted by Sisters Raisin, Crolo and Hyoux, she supplied this want in the most praise worthy manner.....

Sister Morin, lived to an extreme old age, and rendered many eminent services to the monastery of which she was the first novice. We see her still in 1724, with her pen in hand, adding to the annals of the Hôtel-Dieu, the events of that epoch. She is resting now, from her past fears and toils, enjoying the reward of works and merits, which were the fruits of that first heroic resolution, taken in her eleventh year, and kept faithfully, until she became a venerable octogenarian.



"was then led to a seat of honor, which had been prepared expressly for the occasion; though sick and weakened by the long fatiguing sea voyage, the Marquis refused this distinction, and knelt unsupported upon the rough stone pavement, to pay his homages to the Most High. This done, soft echoes of the *Te Deum* resounded throughout the humble sanctuary." Canada was still in its infancy, but the regal splendors of its first Governors have never been surpassed. The chronicle adds: "The Vice-Roy never went out alone, whenever he appeared in public, he was preceded by twenty-four guards, six pages in Court costumes; then came the Marquis surrounded by his officers, whose brilliant uniforms were resplendent with gold and silver; followed six footmen in livery, then came the magnificent regiment of Carignan with its eighty noble officers, superbly attired.

The Marquis of Tracy was enchanted with the aspect of the country, and evinced from the first moment of his arrival, a deep interest in everything connected with it. The Indians, attracted by the splendor of these demonstrations, and learning that the Marquis was the King's representative, gathered together from all parts to pay him homage and testify that they looked upon him, as a Protector, who would avenge the insults and cruelties which they unceasingly received from their common enemy, the Iroquois. Their compliments were accompanied by presents of their kind, which the Indian orator deposited at the feet of the Vice-Roy. They were received with becoming dignity. He listened with pleasure to their harangue, promised them his assistance and kept his word, and though he remained but one short year in Canada, he accomplished all that he had promised. In the spring of 1666, he undertook an expedition against the Iroquois, from whose cruelty and insults the country had greatly suffered. The Marquis was sixty-two years of age at this time, still he insisted upon leading his officers himself. The Iroquois were terrified when they saw this army, surrounding their homes and destroying their villages. Notwithstanding their haughtiness and disdain, they came, and humbly sued for peace. Their propositions were

accepted, and the entire country freed, at last, from their cruel incursions. Then came the month of September, when Mr. de Courcelles and Mr. Talon visited Ville-Marie. Every house in the vicinity was honored by their presence. "They soon witnessed," writes one of Sister Bourgeoys' biographers, "the immense good which had resulted from the Infant Communities of the Congregation and Saint Joseph; and desiring to provide the worthy foundress in particular, with every facility for exercising her zeal, and extending it even beyond the borders of Ville-Marie, these gentlemen gave her establishment their entire approbation. Mr. Talon went still further; wishing to put her Congregation on a solid basis, he allowed the citizens to assemble and draw up a petition to His Majesty, requesting that he would sanction her institution by patent letters. The assembly was accordingly held, in one of the apartments of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, the 9th of October, this same year."

Zealous for the welfare of the colony, in a spiritual point of view, Mr. Talon expressed his regrets that the number of clergymen was insufficient, for the increasing wants of the population. In consequence, he wrote to Mr. de Bretonvilliers, Superior of Saint Sulpice in Paris, and made known his desire, that the members of his society should be augmented.

His wishes were soon realized, and all hearts were glad. It would seem that God had a marked predilection for the youthful city, which had been so unreservedly consecrated to His Mother, and for this reason, He showered unceasingly upon it abundant graces and blessings. These primitive endeavors, to gain all hearts to His love were successful, because hearts were strengthened by this life-giving devotion to the Mother of God.

All for Jesus, through Mary, was the great stimulant made use of. Sister Bourgeoys, to gain souls to God, and in our own day, who will deny that Mary has come in person to call men to the love and service of her Divine Son? We have only to recall "Our Lady of La Salette;" "Our Lady of Lourdes." Some time after this event,

Governor de Courcelles, who was justly irritated against the Iroquois, commanded them to lead their prisoners of the different tribes, to Ville-Marie ; the sanctification of their children inspired new works of zeal, the little boys were placed at the Seminary, where they were kindly provided for, and the little girls were confided to Sister Bourgeoys. It was then that Mr. Colbert, the King's minister, wrote to Mr. Talon as follows : " His Majesty, approves of the resolution taken, to bring up " these young indians in the principles of Our Holy Faith, and " to accustom them, as much as possible, to the french mode of " living. We are well aware that you have all the zeal, appli- " cation and piety requisite for so great an undertaking, and " these rare qualities, which we so much admire in you, lead " us to hope for the most satisfactory results. We shall be " under many obligations to you, if from time to time, you " give us notice of the different events which transpire in the " colony." Mr. Talon, in writing to the Minister at Court, says : " I must not forget to mention, that the Seminary has " taken charge of the little boys and sent the girls to the Con- " gregation of Notre-Dame, where they are taught to read and " write, besides various kinds of handiwork."

Sister Bourgeoys gave herself up to the formation of these young minds, heart and soul ; besides the elementary sciences, she taught them all that could possibly promote their temporal and eternal welfare. She formed their young hearts perfectly, and rendered their little school-rooms so pleasant, that these children of the woods, unaccustomed to so much kindness and comfort, thought it the dearest spot on earth. We can easily illustrate this.

Among the children of the Iroquois' prisoners, were two little girls, charming beyond description, Governor de Courcelles, captivated by their winning dispositions, resolved to take charge of them himself. He sent them to the Congregation, and confided their education to Sister Bourgeoys. Needless to say, how perfectly and how lovingly she endeavored to cultivate these desert flowers. Their education was attempted ; she taught them the rudiments of the french

language, and labored to impress upon their young minds, principles of virtue and piety ; in this she succeeded.

Some time later, their hiding place was discovered and one of the children, taken away by her Mother. A Sister of the Congregation informed of this, ran quickly in pursuit. They were overtaken, but scarcely had the child recognized the Sister, than she burst precipitately from the savage but maternal bosom, and threw herself into the sister's arms, with an instinct as true and as real, as if she understood that her spiritual birth was infinitely more precious, than the being she had received from her Iroquois Mother. The other young indian girl, received a dowry from France, which enabled her at a later period to enjoy a respectable position in the Colony. Mr. Talon in speaking of the success that attended Sister Bourgeoys' teachings, and her influence upon these forest children, refers also to the interest which the Princess of Conti, took in the welfare of these little ones. He says : " The " Princess of Conti is the mobile of this pious work. It was in " the month of April last, that she made known her intentions " to me in this respect, making at the same time her first " donation of 1,200 livres, for one of these children." The young Iroquois object of so much sollicitude, was called, Marie Magdalena Catherine Nachatal. She remained with Sister Bourgeoys up to the time of her marriage. Having been perfectly instructed in her religion and in the various duties of life, she was united to a french man by the name of Peter Hogue. This was according to the king's intentions. " The " marriage contract," we read, " was drawn up and signed " at the Congregation, the 14th of November 1672. The young " girls dowry consisted of the funds given by the Princess of " Conti ; Mr. Zachary Du Puy, Major of the garnison stationed " at Ville-Marie, gave her a dwelling house, to which was " attached a large garden and a poultry yard, Mr. Dollier de " Casson of Saint Sulpice, gave furniture and kitchen utensils " to the value of 130 livres." The recital of these events will no doubt surprise our readers, but it became necessary to give similar tokens of encouragement from time to time, to those of

the young indian girls, who had responded to the devotedness of their benefactors. Of a demonstrative character themselves, they loved all that bore the impress of eclat and consideration, though oftentimes, by their own waywardness and inconstancy, they prevented the bestowal of these recompenses.

All this was indeed a satisfaction to Sister Bourgeoys and she praised God from her inmost soul, for the success that he was pleased to give to her labors. Her virtue on these occasions was beyond human praise.

Nearly twenty years had elapsed, since the pious and devoted Sister, had exchanged the vine clad shores of her native land, for the chilling aspect of the indians' home ; if outward scenes had altered, and time and care placed their furrows upon her brow, still, now as then, her spirit's loveliness was fresh and fair. Her faith, her hope, her love, still reflected heaven's light, and the sweet influence of her charity, descended like a mild shower on those around her. These words of Saint Paul, " Brethren, be never weary in well doing," were fully exemplified in her conduct.

## CHAPTER NINTH.

(Sister Bourgeoys' zeal for the sanctification of youth.)—The Mother boarding school of Ville-Marie.—Pupils of 1681.—The period of leaving school.—External Congregation.—The House of Providence.—How Sister Bourgeoys provided for the future homes of Ville-Marie.—Tributes paid to Sister Bourgeoys' zeal, by Mr. Dollier de Casson.—Theresa Tagokouita.—How the Sisters lived at this time.—Sister Bourgeoys consents to build a more spacious Convent.—Second attempt to build the church of Bonsecours.

"If you build upon marble 'says one of our great american writers,' it will perish; if you work upon stone, time will efface it. If you rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if you work upon immortal minds, if you imbue them with high principles, with the love of God and of their fellow men, you engrave upon those tablets, something which time cannot efface, but which will brighten to all eternity." Penetrated with this conviction, Sister Bourgeoys made the sanctification of youth, the starting point of her zealous efforts. The solicitude, with which she watched over the tender years of her pupils, evinced the Apostolic Charity that burned within her breast: a skilful gardener watches carefully, lest a rude hand or a cold blast, should nip the flowret in the bud. The rose expands to drink in the morning dew, ere the scorching noon day's sun, dries up its petals. Sister Bourgeoys willed that the morning of their lives, should be refreshed by the dew of religious culture, ere the simoon of maturer years destroyed their perfume or withered their beauty; she turned their youthful aspirations towards heavenly things, ere their hearts knew earth's guile. In the beginning of the colony, her solicitude extended indiscriminately to all—but when the population became more considerable, she restrained her zeal to the formation of young girls, without distinction of rank or condition. "The Blessed Virgin, 'she would often say,' received with an equal affection, the wise men and the shepherds, when they came to adore her Divine Son. To imitate her, the Sisters of the Congre-

"gation, must have the same charity for the poor and the rich. Should any preference be given, let it be bestowed upon the most needy. If our heavenly Mother accompanied her Divine Son, to the wedding of Cana in Galilee, it was no doubt, because poverty was there, which gave to her the means of exercising her charity, in their behalf."

It is well understood that science alone is insufficient, to regulate the passions of the human heart, or relieve its moral miseries; from religion only, can it receive the constituents of its happiness, a peaceful conscience for here below, and hopes for the eternal future. If Sister Bourgeoys succeeded so admirably in the formation of young hearts, it was because this essential principle was strongly inculcated in the daily lessons her pupils received. One of the writers of that time tells us: "That the education given, even at this early period, was all that could possibly be desired. The pupils of the Congregation contracted from their very infancy, those habits of mildness, affability and politeness, which are inseparable from true charity."

Fully aware that nothing is more pernicious to youth, than an idle unsettled life, Sister Bourgeoys formed her pupils to habits of neatness and industry, fitting them worthily for the heavy avocations of future years.

"The results of Sister Bourgeoys' mode of education," writes Charlevoix, "are marvellous, and we see at Ville-Marie, women, who dwelling in the bosom of poverty and even misery, are nevertheless perfectly instructed in their religion, ignoring none of those things they should know, bringing up their children in the love and fear of God, sanctifying their lives by the meek acceptance of their daily crosses."

Education, however, should produce the desired effect, and for this reason it should be proportioned to the wants and social position of each and all. To succeed in this, we see Sister Bourgeoys opening the first boarding-school in Montreal, as early as the year 1681, and here were educated from their most tender years, the daughters of Ville-Marie's most distinguished citizens. Not so thronged as are the spacious halls of



Villa-Maria in our own day, still, this mother boarding-school was dearly prized by the joyous young hearts, who graced its precincts. Hundred and ninety-seven years have flown by, since then, and as we sit in the soft sunshine gazing upon the, fancies, which our imagination loves to create, our thoughts wander instinctively back to the past, and captivated by these visionary scenes, we look upon the winning artlessness of those fair young beings ; we listen to the merry sounds, that spring up from the joyous fountains of youth, and our eyes follow them as they trip on the velvet green. Daughter of France ! Margaret Bourgeoys, child of Mary and of Troyes ! this is the magnificent result of thy labor, of thy sacrifices, of thy steadfast zealous love !

But let us come back from our reverie. All is hushed and still. We ask, where are you now guileless beings ? who first claimed her care and love ? Alas ! all are gone ; those voices we hear no more,—but, as we descend the stream of years, silvery echoes are floating around us ; the same merry peal of laughter, the same guileless fling of wanton youth, fall upon our ear,—as they fell perchance on hers, nearly two hundred years ago. 'Tis the same incense breathing prayer, at morn, at eve, at holy hour. The evening hymn at close of day, the same words, lisped by other voices. Oh ! hallowed old walls of that first boarding school ! were ye not loved ? aye, cherished fondly ! It was indeed so, and for this reason, we place before your eyes, dear reader, the names of these first pure blossoms, that bloomed in our convent garden.

Pupils of the first boarding-school opened in Montreal in 1681 :

Louisa Migeon de Bransat,	aged 13 years.
Marie Soumande,	" 10 "
Jane Dufresnoy Carrion,	" 10 "
Marie du Haut Mesnil,	" 9 "
Marie Lenoir (1),	" 8 "

(1) She entered Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation when still quite young, and bore the name of Saint-Herman. She died in 1736, aged 45 years. A younger sister, Frances Lenoir, entered some time later, and was known as Saint-Elizabeth. She died in 1735.

Magdalena de Varennes, aged 7 years.

Christina du Haut Mesnil, “ 6 “

In speaking upon education, Sister Bourgeoys remarks that “ the Sisters must render themselves competent, to teach all “ kinds of work, so that their pupils, stimulated by their good “ examples, may shun idleness, which is the mother of every “ vice. For this reason, “ she adds : “ the boarders, as well as “ the day scholars, must be taught to work.” Aware that the period of leaving school is extremely critical to many young persons, Sister Bourgeoys’ solicitude ceased not at the expiration of that time. She would have considered her work incomplete, if its benefits were restrained solely to the classroom. In order to preserve the virtuous inclinations she had so carefully developed, she assembled on Sundays and Holydays, those of her pupils who had completed their education, and led them, little by little, to join her external Congregation. It was in those reunions that her motherly solicitude shone with a tenfold lustre. Touching fervent instructions on the means of sanctifying themselves, in the world and spread around the family hearth the “ Good odor of Jesus-Christ,” she convinced them that devotion, to prove salutary in the world, “ must live on the love of God and resignation to the decrees of Providence, on kindness, humility and modesty, and is, in itself, the perfection of charity.” Saint Francis of Sales says : “ if charity is a plant, devotion is its flower ; if it be a gem, devotion is its lustre.”

It would be impossible to enumerate the good, achieved by means of this admirable association. How many young persons owed the preservation of their innocence, to the assiduity with which they frequented these reunions ; how many others, were instruments of salvation, to some loved, but erring member, of the household band, because of the instructions they had there received. For some others these reunions were the “ solitary spot,” where an interior voice, spoke to their inmost souls saying, “ Harken ! O daughter and incline thine ear : forget “ also thy own people, and thy father’s house, and the King.

"will be charmed with thy beauty : for He is the Lord thy  
"God, who is to be adored by all the nations." (Psalm xxiv.)

Oh ! what a magnificent recompense, must have been  
awarded to zeal such as this ! What glory gained by this insatiable thirst of winning souls to God ! It is said, that :

" If from out one bleeding bosom  
You have plucked one bitter thorn.  
If you've cheered one drooping spirit  
When its every hope was gone ;  
If you've stretched the hand in kindness,  
To lead erring, straying feet  
There's a rich reward awaits you,  
And love's labor, oh ! how sweet."

Sister Marie Barbier, who had long been a member of the  
external congregation, and who supplied Sister Bourgeoys'  
place, at a later period, in speaking of her zeal during these reunions, adds. " This occupation is not only sublime, but  
"Apostolic. It is the continuation of Our Lord's own work,  
"and the greatness of this duty penetrates me, with fear and  
"confusion, each time that I am called upon to perform it."

This external Congregation of Our Lady of Victory, whose  
commencement dates as far back as 1659, still exists in all its  
pristine fervor, and is a source of wonderful edification to Montreal and its vicinity. Their weekly reunions are held, within  
the inclosure of the Sisters of the Congregation, and always  
presided over by one of their number. We shall come back  
to this subject. " We read, that some persons, through a  
spirit of contradiction, demanded that these reunions should be  
suppressed, pretexting that they were of little or no good. But  
Sister Bourgeoys, would never consent to this, declaring on  
the contrary, that she would continue them all her life and  
added, " that if these assemblies had no other result, than that  
of preventing the commission of but one mortal sin, she would  
feel amply compensated for all her trouble." And for this  
reason, when she was at the point of death, she begged of her  
sisters, that they would never consent to abandon this good  
work, which she knew from her long experience, to be a power-

ful stimulant to virtue and preservative against the levity and inconstancy "of a great number of young girls." Her intentions have ever been faithfully respected and this association, the oldest in the city of Montreal, is now more flourishing than ever. A part from the spiritual exercises of this external Congregation, Sister Bourgeoys' incomparable zeal, led her to devise other plans, for the sanctification of young girls of the indigent class of society, who are often times deprived of means to advance in virtue. Called upon to earn their daily bread, and often times, to support an aged or infirm parent, numbers of young girls, are exposed to look upon their subsistence or the means of gaining it, as the "One thing necessary." Her experience of persons and things, led her to remedy this evil as soon as it appeared. She established a kind of work-house wherein these young girls were taught some honest calling, which would enable them to earn a respectable living and at the same time, ensure their virtuous inclinations. It was called the "House of Providence," and, at the time of its foundation, some twenty young girls were placed there, under the direction of Sisters, designed to watch over and direct their moral training. This house was situated quite near the Convent of the Congregation, for the greater convenience of the Sisters. The Seminary of Saint Sulpice contributed to the good work, and provided each week, a certain quantity of bread for their nourishment. God blessed these united efforts, and the utility of this establishment, excited universal admiration; de Denonville, Governor General of Canada, wrote to Court about it, and requested in its favor, royal protection. "When I visited Ville-Marie," he writes in the month of November 1684. "I saw "there an establishment of the Sisters of the Congregation, "under the direction of Sister Bourgeoys, which is a source of "immense good to the colony. Attached to her Convent, is "another institution called "The House of Providence," where "a number of grown up young girls assemble, to work together. "They might perhaps undertake to manufacture, if you assist "them and procure them the means of doing so." Deeply interested in the welfare of Ville-Marie, whose daily progress

she had witnessed, Sister Bourgeoys' principal aim, in the training of these young girls, was to fit them in a christian manner, for the sterner duties of after life. The moral strength of the colony she knew, depended upon good and christian mothers, who were to preside at its fire-sides ; nothing then, should be left undone on her part, to ensure this blessing. And when the vessels came from France, bringing each a certain number of young girls, sent by the King, for the purpose of establishing themselves in the colony, no words can portray her eagerness, to assist and care for them, in every possible way. Of the poor young girls, exiles from their native land, many were bereft of those ties which bind them to home, they came then willingly, to these western shores, in the hope of making for themselves a happy future. Mr. Dollier de Casson, tells us, " that in 1659, " when the pious Sister returned from France, she brought " thirty two of these young persons with her, who had been " confided to her care, and to whom she was a tender, devoted " mother, not only during their voyage across the sea, but even " up to the time of their marriage, keeping them with her and " bestowing every delicate attention, that her kind heart could " suggest ; " he adds, " It was happy for them that they fell into " her hands." Such was really the case, Sister Bourgeoys not only received them into her house, but she lived with them as if they had been her own children, and who may speak of the good advice, of the touching instructions, that fell from her lips, in their temporal and eternal welfare. " Some years after their " first voyage writes Sister Bourgeoys : " a french vessel neared " our shores, with eighteen young girls, sent by His Majesty, " for the colony. I went myself to receive them at the river " side, convinced that I should open the door of the Blessed " Virgin's house, to all these persons. Our dwelling was too " small to contain them all, so I fixed up another one, adjacent " to ours, which I had purchased sometime previously, and I " went and lived there with them. I thought it prudent to do " so, as these young persons came purposely, to embrace the " married state."

The Sisters at that time had simple coverlets to their beds,

and when these young girls came, Sister Bourgeoys' generous charity and desire to gain their hearts, so as to lead them on, more easily in the path of virtue, led her to provide them with the sheets and other comforts, which were laid by in the house, and which the Sisters never used. In this manner, she won their confidence and formed with them, such feelings of friendly intercourse, that she became the confidential friend, the counsellor and protectress of each and all. To her, they went in all their troubles and necessities. She had ever a kindly word, a cheering smile, and thus she drew all hearts towards her.

But notwithstanding her extreme vigilance and constant application to form these persons, to the practice of virtue, she was no doubt oftentimes compelled, to see the fruit of her long exertions almost destroyed, by negligence or by the frailty of nature. The human heart is inconstant, and at times our best resolutions are forgotten, or at most but slightly remembered. How powerful then, a gentle reproof, a loving reprimand, a word of counsel, to lead us back to the path, from which we have wandered, if we deign to hear it. Scripture tells us : " Woe to those who are wise in their own estimation." When such things occurred, Sister Bourgeoys brought them back to the spot, where they had received their first instructions, and by means of spiritual retreats, gained them to return to God's fear and love, by the path of repentance ; then, when these erring ones were fully reinstated in their rights, as children of a heavenly mother, she turned her zeal in another direction ; the pure and innocent were now the objects of her tender love and solicitude, Oh ! how she loved to prepare young hearts, to receive their God for the first time ! How lovingly she watched over these fragile plants, destined to bloom and bear fruit for eternity. This action so important and so solemn, action that exercises so powerful an influence upon our after life, calls for the worthiest preparation. Consequently, she gave to these children, the facility of spending a few days in recollection, and in the practice of those exercises of piety, proportioned to their age. Many times, even before she opened her boarding-school, we see parents placing their children in

her hands, for some weeks previous to the [great day, so that they might be properly prepared. We fear not to say, that these first communions, were all that Heaven could possibly desire, that Angels looked down lovingly upon these earthly angels, whose purity, innocence and piety, were so agreeable to the God of Angels, and to the Queen of Virgins.

Oh! if there still be melody on earth,  
Worthy the sacred bowers, where man drew birth  
When Angels steps, their path rejoicing trod,  
And the air trembled with the breath of God,  
It lives in those soft accents to the sky,  
Borne from the lips of stainless infancy."

(HEMANS).

+ Mr. Dollier ~~de~~ Casson, in his history of Montreal, written in 1672, pays the following tribute, to the influence which Sister Bourgeoys exercised throughout the entire colony. "Ever since her arrival, she has rendered unspeakable service to the inhabitants of Ville-Marie, in a variety of ways, but particularly by the instruction given to persons of her own sex. "This has been her constant occupation, and Heaven has given special benedictions to her endeavors, to inspire other young persons to join her, and share her labors. They have lived thus for some years past and now form a most edifying little community." Sister Bourgeoys' efforts, were not lost upon the indian girls, and we read "that an Iroquois maiden by name, Theresa Tegakouita, created a great sensation among the young persons of her nation, in consecrating herself to God, by a vow of virginity; and this resolution on her part, came no doubt, from those virtues, with which Sister Bourgeoys and her companions, had perfumed the colony:" we read, "that when she heard the sisters were consecrated to God, she gave the missionary Fathers no peace, until they had allowed her to do the same. They put her virtues to the test, and only gave their consent, when they were assured of its solidity." This young Iroquois died shortly after, aged twenty four years, and in odor of sanctity.

Such were the fruits of Sister Bourgeoys' daily labors, such,



the beautiful reflection of her own virtuous life. She had a wonderful talent for imparting to others, the means of sanctifying their daily actions, and doing all, for God's greater glory. Then, there was a spirit of disinterestedness, which accompanied her at all times, and this spirit she inspired to all those, who wished to share her undertakings. You remember dear reader, that when the father of one of her young companions gave her his daughter, and asked how she intended to live in Canada. She replied that she could only promise bread and soup to those who desired to follow her, with privations and toil ? And so it was, their days were composed of labors and sacrifices ; notwithstanding their scanty resources, they succeeded and prospered.

Sister Morin of the Hôtel-Dieu, in speaking of Sister Bourgeoys' first companions says. " They, with Sister Bourgeoys, " were the worthy foundations of the Congregation, working " day and night, cutting and sewing for the wants of the colonists, clothing the indian women, besides, teaching and " instructing in every possible way, the children of Ville-Marie. She adds, Sister Crolo received for her share, the " household work and out door labor, and in this office, she " exhausted her strength and years. She devoted herself with " untiring energy to all the drudgery of the house, esteeming " herself the least, the servant of all ; she is now in her eighth " ieth year, and universally revered for her heroic virtue." You will allow dear reader, that a Sisterhood formed . . . a life like this, could not be a burden to the infant city of Ville-Marie. Their food was the simplest and coarsest kind, and their only furniture a few common, indispensable articles ; they slept upon straw beds, without sheets and only a simple covering. Their mode of living was so much the more meritorious, as it was voluntary on their part, and they imposed these privations upon themselves, that they might be better able to assist others in their necessities. Theirs was the perfection of christian charity. God will not be out done in generosity, and He gave them the means of obtaining certain temporal acquisitions, this was certainly a proof that He had accepted, as done for

himself, their works of love and charity. Mr. Dollier de Casson says: "What increases my admiration is, that these Sisters "without any foundation whatever, and instructing our children "gratuitously, as they have always done; have nevertheless "acquired by their own industry, temporal acquisitions, such "as land and property, in several places on the island of "Montreal." The stable, wherein the heroic Sister had commenced her good works, had long since become insufficient to supply their wants. This necessity had compelled Sister Bourgeoys to erect on the same land, another house, larger and better adapted to their occupations; sometime after, owing to the augmentation of her household, this second dwelling proved incomplete, and Sister Bourgeoys was prevailed upon, to build a third residence of more spacious dimensions. Consequently, she erected upon an adjacent lot, a large stone house, unpretending in appearance but, convenient and suitable to the Sisters, occupations. No sooner, was it finished, than she fell prey to many bitter regrets, which were no doubt prompted by that love of poverty, which had marked every act of her life, and which she felt, should be the characteristic of her Congregation; notwithstanding this interior trouble, permitted no doubt by God, for a still greater good, she was led to undertake another good work, or rather to realize her former plan of erecting a church, in honor of her heavenly Mother, according to the project formed, in 1657.

After Sister Bourgeoys's return from France, in 1659, she observed that all the materials, she had amassed for the building of the church, had disappeared; then, besides the precarious state of the Seminary at that time, the colony itself, was oftentimes on the brink of ruin by the almost daily attacks, made by the Iroquois. All these circumstances united, compelled her to abandon the idea, until a more favorable moment would come to her assistance. "Besides," she adds, as our household since my return from France had taken the form of a "community, I had not the same liberty for acting, as before. "When I saw, in the year 1670, that there was no means of "constructing this church, because of the expense incurred for

“ the building of our new house and barn, I was inspired to  
“ promise Our Blessed Lady, to do my utmost, to have a sanc-  
“ tuary erected in her honor, and almost immediately my  
“ regrets and apprehensions vanished.”

It was probably after this promise, that Sister Bourgeoys in awaiting circumstances more favorable, raised a small wooden building, upon the foundations, formerly destined for the church, as Sister Morin tells us, “ that nine or ten years after the first attempt, Sister Bourgeoys erected a small chapel in honor of “ the Mother of God, which was greatly frequented by the “ pious colonists, and that many prodigies of grace and conversion were, here, witnessed. Many times also, miracles “ were wrought in favor of both body and soul ; because of “ the great faith and piety of those who went there to pray.”

## CHAPTER TENTH.

(Designs of Heaven upon Sister Bourgeoys' institution.—She returns to France.—Incidents connected with her voyage.—The child of Providence.—Old friends meet.—Kindness shown to Sister Bourgeois by Mr. Colbert.—The King of France grants all she desires.—Other generous companions.—Bishop de Laval.—Mr. de Fan-  
camp and his statue.—Sister Bourgeoys' confidence in God.—Our Lady Queen of Ville-Marie.

The designs of Heaven upon Sister Bourgeoys' institution were now clearly manifested. Her heroic devotedness to the colony had produced abundant fruits ; benedictions sprang up around her path, and the citizens of Ville-Marie were buoyant, with the fondest anticipations for the future. One prayer alone remained unanswered. It was to see the Congregation established on a solid footing, by royal authority. With her usual calm, moderation and confidence in God, she relied solely on His divine assistance, for herself and for her community ; while those around her, interested in its success, deemed it prudent to make use of the advantages offered, and urged the pious foundress to do all in her power, to realize the common desire. We remember that in 1667, Mr. Talon had authorized the citizens, to present a petition to His Majesty the King of France, requesting Patent Letters in favor of Sister Bourgeois' community. The advantages it had procured to the colony, and the motherly devotedness she had ever evinced in its welfare, both moral and religious, had rendered her institution inexpressibly dear to all. Sister Bourgeoys was induced then, by the ardent solicitations of one and all, to return to France, for the purpose of seeking the protection of the Court, and receiving from Louis the Fourteenth, a charter for her house. Besides this, she wished to gain other generous associates, to assist her in the many good works she had commenced, and proposed to commence at a later period. In consequence, this same year 1670, having obtained all the necessary permissions, she

bade adieu for the second time, to the land of her adoption, and departed for France. This journey presented no ordinary difficulties, and it required all her trusting energy for its accomplishment ; contradictions and humiliations marked its onset. Through want of attention on the part of those, to whom she had confided her trunks and papers, they were left behind, and the signal for leaving the port had been given. The vessel sailed, Sister Bourgeoys, alone of her sex, deprived of every comfort, and as she tells us, " I had not ten coppers in my possession." Thirty-one days, spent in this manner, to which, we may add, every other discomfort, attending a long sea voyage. " I reached Paris, late in the evening," she writes, " without money, without clothing, without friends. I spent the night, " in a house near Saint Sulpice. The next morning, I assisted " at Mass, in this church, then, as I perceived, that the priest " was taking the Blessed Sacrament, to a sick person, I joined " the faithful and followed Our Lord. This over, I took the " directions, given me by Mr. Perrot, our parish priest, in Montreal, who had profited, of my return to France, to write to " his friends. Thanks to these letters, the acquaintance, was " soon made, and all the necessary details given ; they requested " me very kindly, to take breakfast with them, I accepted willingly, as I had taken nothing since the day before, and I had " considerable fatigue, before me.

" Other letters of importance, remained in my possession for " the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, I hastened to deliver them, " and at the same time ascertain, if possible, where Mr. de " Maisonneuve resided." While she is pursuing her route, let us pause for a moment, and admire the conduct of this incomparable woman. Did ever virtuous action recall more vividly these words of Sacred Scripture : " Be ye not solicitous for " the morrow." Without rank, wealth or influence, Sister Bourgeoys returns almost a stranger to her native land ; friendless and alone, seeks those upon whose intercession she depends, for she knows well, that the child of Providence is never left unprovided for. He who clothes the lillies of the field in all their regal splendor ; He who gives, to a little blade

of grass, its own peculiar shade and form, could he abandon the work of his hands, formed to His own image and likeness, destined to love and serve Him on earth, and to dwell with Him forever in Heaven? Ah! Sister Bourgeoys knew it well, God was not for her a strange God,—His love would shield her, His Providence assist her in his own good time,—and loving her God as she loved him, no journey was to her perilous, no fatigue beyond endurance, no humiliation of little worth. It is incontestable that on many occasions, she was providentially assisted, and it seemed as if Angels had winged their flight, here and there, to predispose men and circumstances in her favor. We read that previous to her departure from Quebec, a gentleman, who owed her a certain sum of money, asked in what manner she wished him to pay the Sisters. She answered, that this sum might be of use to her in Paris, and then the thought was dismissed from her mind. "Having reached the Seminary," she writes, "as I stood waiting for admittance, I heard some one inside pronounce my name." Adding: "I have received an order to give the sum of one hundred livres, to a person entirely unknown to me. As the door opened, I stepped forward, and introduced myself, as the person in question; then, presenting my letter from Mr. Perrot, all doubts were cleared; I accompanied this gentleman to his residence near by, where I received the amount due." She continues: "Some years previous, I lent one hundred and fifty livres to a young man in Montreal, who promised that Mr. Blondel would remit this sum in Paris. In the interval, Mr. Blondel died, the paper was mislaid, in a word the circumstance had long since been forgotten. One day, as I was passing through a street in Paris, I heard some one walking quickly behind, as if wishing to rejoin me. A person approached, and inquired if I knew any one who had recently arrived from Canada, called Margaret Bourgeoys? I answered in the affirmative; he then requested me to receive a certain sum of money, which I refused, not knowing the motive of his generosity. I was soon reassured, however; a hasty explanation was given.

"and I received the amount which had been so long due." We shall find her now, dear reader, in the vicinity of Mr. de Maisonneuve's dwelling, and soon after, receiving from her staunch friend, a kind and hearty welcome. But a short time previous to these events, Mr. de Maisonneuve had constructed a cabin, in the then Canadian fashion, and furnished an apartment, wherein he might receive his dear far off friends, to whom he ever remained strongly attached. "Upon my arrival," writes Sister Bourgeoys, "he came down, opened the door himself, and welcomed me with inexpressible joy." The satisfaction was no doubt reciprocal, and we can easily imagine, how attentively the former Governor of Ville-Marie listened to the most trivial detail, concerning his well loved Canada, and how willingly he assisted Sister Bourgeoys, by word and deed on this occasion. Delighted to think that she was the first of his old friends, to inhabit the apartment he had prepared, he hastened to offer her refreshments; and that nothing should be wanting, he went out himself and procured a bottle of good wine, so as to restore her strength, after the fatigue she had undergone.

Sister Morin tells us that, "this cordial hospitality, was not the only proof of his good will towards Sister Bourgeoys, for after she had obtained the patent letters she desired, and was sojourning in the city of Rouen, with a number of young persons, destined for Ville-Marie and for her community, he sent his domestic Louis Frin, with an order for 200 livres, for each; besides a daily allowance, which was to continue until their arrival in Quebec." In a word, he was the officious agent for Ville-Marie, in time of want and assistance. Few details remain concerning Sister Bourgeoys' stay in France, particularly with regard to the manner, in which she obtained these letters for her Congregation; but we have evident proofs, that she received every possible assistance, from several persons, whose zeal and piety led them to take a deep interest in the affairs of Ville-Marie. Mr. Colbert minister of the Navy, was all devoted to Sister Bourgeoys' cause. He had been apprized of the utility of her institution, by Mr. Talon; and not satisfied with



having obtained the charter she desired, he procured her at the same time, many other advantages, and wrote to Mr. Talon as follows, in her behalf. "With regard to the establishment of the Congregation of Notre Dame, destined for the sanctification and instruction of young persons, it is His Majesty's desire, that you do all in your power, to strengthen and put on a firm footing this useful institution. It is a good work, and will contribute greatly to the extension of our holy faith, throughout the colony." Extending his delicate attentions still further, Mr. Colbert, took every necessary precaution, that Sister Bourgeoys might not be molested, in any way, with regard to the charter, which was issued and signed by King Louis, in the month of May 1671, and registered in parliament, in the month of June following.

"In the preamble of these letters, His Majesty recalls the spirit of zeal which led Sister Bourgeoys to Canada, in 1653, where she had founded a community for the instruction of young girls." She has taught gratuitously writes His Majesty, "every branch of education, necessary to the young persons who surround her. Success has attended her endeavors, and Heaven has bestowed so many singular favors, and continual graces, upon her undertaking, that neither she, nor her associates, have ever been a burden to the colony. With her own resources, she has built a convent, bought and cultivated a considerable extent of land, and erected a large farm house, which is well supplied with every essential comfort. This establishment has already received the approbation of Bishop de Laval, of Sieur de Courcelles, our Lieutenant General in Canada, and of Sieur Talon, our Intendant. Wishing on our side to contribute towards the good work, and desiring with all our heart, to give Sister Bourgeoys, the means requisite for maturing her plans, and extending her institution, to all those localities where God's glory demands. We approve and confirm by these patent letters, bearing our signature, the establishment of the said Congregation, on the island of Montreal, under the jurisdiction of our Ordinary; and we declare, that no one shall

"trouble or molest her, in any way, or upon any pretext whatsoever." X

+ Needless to say, how happy and how grateful Sister Bourgeoys felt, when this object of her solicitude was attained. One other desire remained to be gratified, gain a few generous associates, then return to her hopes and her responsibilities. She visited again her native city, six youthful companions, some, her own nieces, offered most willingly to leave their homes, and share her toils and privations. It was more than she had asked for, and her cup of bliss was full. Upon the point of leaving France, she heard that M<sup>r</sup>. de Laval, Bishop of Quebec had arrived; it was but natural that she should desire to meet him; accordingly, she went with her little family to receive his blessing, make known the success of her journey and ask his approval. The Prelate entertained her in the most affable and fatherly manner, approved of all that she had accomplished, and allowed her companions, to commence their novitiate in her Congregation. A happier moment, a still greater consolation, if we may say so, now awaited her. You are aware dear reader, of the marked devotion, the zeal and piety, which animated all the members of the Montral Company! All were specially interested in the cause of religion in Canada, and the source of their generosity and fervor, was their unbounded love and confidence in Our Blessed Mother. Before leaving Paris, Sister Bourgeoys made known her intention to build a church, in honor of the Blessed Virgin.

Delighted at the Sister's pious resolution, Mr. Macé of Saint-Sulpice, gave her one hundred livres, to commence the enterprise. Another gentleman, Mr. de Fancamp, offered to defray the expenses of her journey; Sister Bourgeoys declined his offer, saying that instead, she would be happy to receive a large statue, to place in the church she intended to erect. Pleased with her filial love for Mary, and enchanted to contribute towards her glory in Canada, Mr. de Fancamp sent out immediately to procure one, to his liking. His messengers did their utmost but to no avail, not one could be found in all Paris, to suit him. The hour of departure drew near, and

Sister Bourgeoys could not delay. What was to be done? Two other members of the company, hearing of Mr. de Fancamp's embarrassment, came to his assistance, these gentlemen were Mr. Denis Leprêtre, of Saint Sulpice, and his brother Louis Leprêtre, Lord of Fleury. The household chapel of their ancient castle, contained among other precious objects, a beautiful statue of Our Lady, by which it had pleased God to work miracles—and this, they resolved to send to Ville-Marie, where it would be more honored than else where, because the land was consecrated in a special manner, to the Mother of God. The statue was received with gratitude, placed in a niche which Mr. de Fancamp—decorated richly, before giving it to Sister Bourgeoys. At this time, a fearful epidemic prevailed in Paris, and on the evening of "Good Friday," the same day that Mr. Fancamp obtained the statue, he fell victim to the malignant disease, and in a few hours, was reduced to the extremity.

"On Holy Saturday," writes Mr. de Fancamp, "having been blind and naturally anxious, because of the nature of my disease, I addressed myself confidentially to the Blessed Virgin, whose statue was beside me at this moment. Ah! my good mother, 'said I, 'you are going to Canada, that all may witness your generosity and your mercy; can you consent to leave one of Ville-Marie's unworthy founders, in this distressing situation? Only restore me to health, give me time to do penance, for my sins, and I will publish everywhere, your power and your greatness, I will contribute towards the erection of your chapel, and to begin I offer you the sum of thirty pistoles."

Hardly had these words of filial confidence escaped his lips, when his sufferings ceased, and soon after he was perfectly restored to health. This marvellous cure, was a manifest proof of Our Holy Mother's loving power; a last boon given to her loved France, ere leaving it for ever. Mr. de Fancamp, lived twenty years longer, and when death came, it found the grateful child of Mary, in readiness to receive his heavenly Mother's welcome.

The statue, now doubly precious, was placed in Sister Bour-

geoy's hand, with the sum promised by Mr. Fancamp, and to which he added the attestation of his cure. It was the last day of April 1672. Emotions of love and gratitude, inundated the pious Sister's heart, at the thought of this priceless acquisition. What were toils, privations, sufferings to her now, since her loving Mother, had given this proof of her desire, to be honored at Ville-Marie; and she was the chosen instrument to spread the sweet devotion, throughout the land. She started for Rouen, where unforeseen circumstances compelled her to remain for an entire month. This delay proved injurious to her purse, and one day, the person to whom she had confided their domestic concerns, seeing that their resource was about to fail, said to Sister Bourgeoys. "Sister, we have only money enough for this week: what are we to do then? Have confidence in God," answered the sister; all that is very good rejoined "the other, but in awaiting we must have something to live on." That will suffice, replied Sister Bourgeoys, God will provide for us." And He did provide, for before the close of this same week, came Louis Frin, with the assistance obtained from Mr. Colbert, by their devoted friend de Maisonneuve. From Rouen to Havre, there were other delays, which Sister Bourgeoys sanctified by pious pilgrimages, with her companions; at times to obtain fair weather, again to renew before some time honored altar, their resolution to practice all their lives, the purest maxims of Christian perfection. Finally the preparations for their departure were concluded, the vessel raised anchor, and the sails were unfurled on the 2nd of July, festival of our Lady's Visitation. The image of their heavenly Mother, was their consolation and safe guard during the long sea voyage. It was Sister Bourgeoys' desire to reach home, for the feast of the Assumption, in this she was gratified, for the vessel entered the harbour of Quebec, two days previous to this festival.

Here again, her submission to the decrees of Heaven, appeared in all its perfection. Upon arriving in this city, a person came up to her, and informed her, rather abruptly, that the Congregation of Notre-Dame, object of so many sacrifices

on her part, was on the brink of ruin. Unmoved by this hasty and strange announcement, she replied calmly, "He who destroys, can restore when He pleases,"—thereby intimating that earthly opposition was powerless, in presence of the Divine Will.

Upon reaching Montreal, she did indeed behold her community, in a precarious state; but she did not infer from this, that all was lost, or that poverty could ever ruin a Congregation, whose members were solely dependent on Divine Providence; and for this reason, she was perfectly delighted to receive for her first dinner, upon her return from France, a small piece of salt meat, and a morsel of bread. Notwithstanding this, her heart was replete with confidence, and in the course of the afternoon, calling Sister Geneviève Durosoy, to whom she had confided the culinary department, she desired her to prepare the evening meal for the community. "But what shall I prepare," asked the sister, "there is nothing, absolutely nothing in the house." "Go to your office and confide in Providence," replied Sister Bourgeoys. The faith of the pious foundress was shortly after recompensed. Friends came in, bringing all sorts of provisions as a "welcome home!" and ere nightfall, there was an abundance of everything in the house. Sister Bourgeoys' journey to France, was the colonists' work; consequently, the success which had attended it, was a source of untold joy, to all the citizens of Ville-Marie. They had first requested Patent Letters, to strengthen and protect her establishment, so dear to all. Mr. Dollier de Casson, in referring to these circumstances, adds: "Sister Bourgeoys has certainly accomplished marvellous things. She has just returned from France, after a sojourn of two years; there, without friends, money or credit, she subsisted, obtained expeditions from Court, and came back with several companions to share her labor. All this is admirable, and proves that the good Sister and her Congregation are under God's special protection."

The miraculous statue, which Sister Bourgeoys had obtained in France, caused unspeakable joy to the inhabitants of Ville-Marie. The details connected with its history, were repeated

again and again, to the willing listeners, who hastened to the Congregation, to gaze with their own eyes, upon the precious image of their heavenly mother. Had she condescended to leave the ancient castle, where generations had come in turn to pay her homage, and pour out at her feet their repeated acts of filial love? All these she had left, to seek out amid wilder scenes, others, whose devotion had never ceased, whose lips had never faltered, when they spoke of their Protectress and their Queen. X She came now, to a land where every inch of the soil, was a consecrated spot, because it was her own domain, the offering of filial hearts. She came to listen to the forest children's vesper hymn, to win them to her love; and to the love of her Divine Son. She came in Margaret Bourgeoys' arms, and when later, the pious Sister led the dark eyed Iroquois and the gentle Huron, to kneel before her shrine, and breathe, in their own *naïve* way, their acts of love, we feel that the Virgin Mother looked upon them, with a ten-fold tenderness, and smiled as they hung garlands of wild flowers, around her altar, and placed at her feet the dark green velvet moss. It was all they could offer, to their sweet Madonna. The statue was first placed in an apartment at the Congregation, but the faithful were impatient to group around her altar; to satisfy their devotion, Mr. Perrot, curate of Ville-Marie, requested that it should be placed in the little wooden sanctuary, which Sister Bourgeoys had erected before leaving for France. She placed it there, herself, in June of 1673, and from this humble abode, the Queen of Ville-Marie, watched over her loving subjects, listened to their words of joy and sorrow, dispensed her favors and blessed them with a mother's love, as they clustered around her feet. For two years, this modest oratory was the dearest spot on earth, to both old and young of Ville-Marie, and when the stone building, first contemplated by Sister Bourgeoys, was erected, they transferred there, the same intensity of filial love, which marked her passage, in the little wooden sanctuary beside the Congregation.



## CHAPTER ELEVENTH.

Notre-Dame de Bonsecours.—Devotion of the people to this shrine.—  
First signal favor conferred upon a Sister of the Congregation.—  
Our Lady's bell.—Sister Morin and the Hospital Nuns.—The mira-  
culous Statue.—Bishop de Laval visits Ville-Marie.—His pastoral  
letter.—Rules for the Congregation of Notre-Dame.—Sister Bour-  
geoys desirous of resigning the Superiority, assembles the Sisters  
for this purpose.—Third journey to France.

Among the many consecrated spots of Ville-Marie, there is one intimately linked with sweet memories of the past, a time honored record, as dear and hallowed to the Pilgrim of 1878, as it was purchase, to the brave and loyal hearts of two centuries ago. Our Lady of Bonsecours ! who has not felt the sacred influence that pervades its precincts, and impresses you, with the conviction that you are treading holy ground ! There, all speaks of the olden time, when faith and hope, when love and earnest zeal were the pioneers of every heart. The foundation of this church is too intimately, linked with Sister Bourgeoys' life, to allow us to pass it over in silence. We have already spoken of her attempts in 1657, to accomplish the pious project ; of a partial realization in 1659. We shall now in 1675, witness her zealous efforts crowned with success.

Upon her return from France, with the precious statue she had there received, she hastened to accomplish her praise-worthy undertaking. As we have already remarked, the little wooden chapel erected in 1659, became the temporary abode, where Mary heard her clients, and bestowed graces and privileges, on those who craved her motherly solicitude. Sister Bourgeoys, having been duly authorized, and happy in the perspective of the love, all hearts would bear, her heavenly mother, set earnestly to work. The three thousands livres, which Mr. de Fancamp had contributed to the enterprise, was employed by Sister Bourgeoys in purchasing different species of merchandise, which she knew, would be needful to the



citizens of Ville-Marie. These goods, she afterwards sold to the inhabitants, whose wants she understood. This gave her a net profit of six hundreds livres, Canadian money; to this sum, she added various other amounts, which had been given for this purpose; and some time afterwards, when she was ready to commence the church, she had amassed the sum of two thousands livres, to which she added one hundred pounds, from her own community, fruit of the Sister's economy and industry. Then, entering into the views of the donors, she requested that this Chapel should be annexed to the Parish Church of Notre-Dame, and be a dependance thereof. Her offer was accepted, and <sup>fr. Chas.</sup> Mr. Souart, of Saint Sulpice, in the name of Mr. de Bretonvilliers, Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris, gave the site for its erection.

The 29th of June, 1675, at the close of Vespers, the corner stone was solemnly blessed and laid with the ordinary ceremonies. The following inscription: "To God the Great, the Good, and the Powerful, and to Blessed Mary ever Virgin, under the title of her glorious Assumption," was placed thereon.

The inhabitants of Ville-Marie, partook of Sister Bourgeoys' enthusiasm. All hands set to work, and the walls rose, as if by magic; every hour, that the devoted Sister could dispose of, was given to the good work. She presided there, directed the workmen, and spent long hours, exposed to the scorching noon-day sun, assisting and encouraging, in every possible way, those upon whom the labors of the day depended. No words can portray her energetic activity during this period; her presence was a powerful stimulant to all. How could strong men, give way to listlessness and fatigue, when a delicate women spurred them on, by word and example. Sister Bourgeoys' devotedness was not without its recompense. We read, "that one of her own nieces, Sister Soumillard, was suffering at this time from an abscess in the head; the slightest movement, increased her pain acutely, and when compelled to sweep her room, she could only do so, in a kneeling posture. Hearing, one

day, that a workman from some cause or other, refused to help the masons, who were absolutely in want of his services, at this moment, and filled with the same ardor, that animated her worthy aunt, she proceeded to the spot, unmindful of her poor aching head, and served the masons herself, for two or three hours in the open air. Her heavenly Mother, rewarded this act of filial love, and from this moment the suffering head, was not only relieved, but at the same time perfectly cured." It is thus, that Mary loves to recompense the slightest act performed in her honor. The first favor, conferred, within the hallowed walls of Bonsecours, was to one of her cherished daughters of the Congregation, and Sister Bourgeoys tells us, that this was not the only miracle of the kind, by which God pleased to show, that this work was agreeable to Heaven. Hearts and hands labored well, because they went together, and so much activity was displayed, that in less than two years, the little sanctuary was finished, its modest steeple shooting upwards, pointing to the eternal realms, and saying in its own mute language: *Sursum Corda!* All hearts on high.

Every thing was complete; even the Bell, destined to call the faithful to the House of Prayer, was obtained by another pious artifice, of the ever watchful Sister. It was made out of a broken cannon, that burst in defending the colony against the Iroquois. "Our bell," writes Sister Bourgeoys, "weighs one hundred pounds, and is made of a broken cannon, which I obtained some years ago, from Mr. ~~de~~ Maisonneuve, for this purpose. Mr. Souart of Saint Sulpice, paid for its manufacture, and the same iron which once served to repel the domestic foe, is again used, thank God, to call them to the 'House of prayer'."

The miraculous statue, was placed in a shrine richly decorated, and "Our Lady of Bonsecours," stood open to the faithful, the first stone church, built on the island of Montreal. The humble Convent of the Congregation, stood not far distant, and there, under the maternal gaze of their Queen and Mother, the Sisters dwelt, toiled and prayed. Their request, that the Chapel might be annexed to the Parish Church

of Ville-Marie, was presented to the Bishop of Quebec. In this petition, the sisters asked "that this church, may never for any reason whatsoever, be separated from the Parish of Notre Dame, nor occupied, nor possessed by any other, so that the intentions and contributions of the Donors, may be respected, as well as the intentions of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame." Finally, they begged the Prelate, to allow them to take charge of the Sanctuary perpetually, to decorate it, and receive the alms offered to finish the enterprise. Bishop Laval, was too happy, to grant their request and ordained expressly, that the Chapel of Bonsecours, should never be separated from the parish church of Ville-Marie, according to Sister Bourgeoys' intentions, those of her community and of all their benefactors in France.

He ordained, that mass should always be celebrated there, on the days of Our Lady's Visitation and Assumption, and that a solemn procession should mark the last festival. The priests of the Seminary then commenced to say mass there, every day. "Mr. Dollier ~~de~~ Casson," writes Sister Bourgeoys, "has given for this chapel, a daily retribution for three years." Sister Soumillard, kept an account of the number of masses said, and we find that during the first three years, more than a thousand were celebrated here. This number is considerable, as priests were scarce everywhere, but particularly in Montreal. Sister Morin, alluding to the great development, which devotion to the Blessed Virgin had taken, adds: "Masses are said there every day, to satisfy the people's devotion to Notre-Dame ~~de~~ Bonsecours. We go there in procession, for public wants and in time of public calamities, and always with success. It is the favorite promenade, for the pious people of the city, and there are few good catholics, in Canada, who have not made offerings or vows, before her Altar, in the time of danger and peril. I say this, so that it may be known everywhere, that the origin of this devotion, is due to Sister Bourgeoys' piety and zeal, to her ardent desire to honor the Mother of God. She had none of this world's goods, to accomplish these things, and notwithstanding she has never been in

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"want, during the course of these enterprises. Her courage is wonderful, she will undertake any good work, when there is question of God's glory. Spiritual and temporal affairs, have a like success in her hands, because it is the pure love of God, that prompts her to act, His Holy Spirit that endows her with so rare an intelligence."

Sister Morin, might well love to praise and bless the sacred walls of Bonsecours, for when the Sisters of the Hospital, were driven from their cloister, in 1734, by a fearful conflagration, this church became a refuge, an Hospital, a grave, for many among them. An epidemic followed the unrelenting flames, and the Sisters had no other place, to lay their sick and perform their works of mercy, towards the dying and the dead; and when eleven of their number, were laid low by the malignant disease, they found a tomb there, neath the pitying gaze of Our Lady of Bonsecours. Some years later, in 1754, a great part of the city, was again destroyed by fire; but the loss of homes and fortunes, seemed nothing to the loss of their beloved Sanctuary. It was reduced to ashes, all was destroyed. One object alone, was found preserved beneath the smoking ruins. It was the precious statue, entire and unstained, not even discolored by the fire. It was borne triumphantly amid' tears of joy, to the Congregation, and we can easily imagine how it was received there. The Sisters placed it, with devotion in their own church, and the Holy Father transferred there, the many precious indulgences, with which the former shrine had been enriched. For some nineteen years, she dispensed favours around a spot, already perfumed, with the fragrance of Margaret Bourgeoys' virtues. At the expiration of this period in 1771, when the Church of Bonsecours was rebuilt, Our Lady was transferred to her throne and to her Altar, to receive anew the protestations of faith, love and confidence, offered her by her children. This famous image, was of dark brown wood, exquisitely sculptured, and after having been for so long a period, an object of profound veneration and filial love, it was snatched from its shrine, by some sacrilegious hand, in 1831; and notwithstanding all the efforts made to recover it, they have so far proved vain.

Primitive piety, has given way to cold indifference, and Notre-Dame de Bonsecours, could not breathe its chilling atmosphere, She is perhaps lending a willing ear, to the fervent clients who surround her, in a home, to us unknown.

And now, let us return to Sister Bourgeoys. We have spoken of her success, in obtaining Patent Letters from the King, which authorized her, "to extend her means of doing good throughout Canada, according to the peculiar wants of each place, and as God's glory demanded." We remember too, that when on the point of leaving France, she presented her six young companions to Bishop de Laval, and obtained from him, full liberty to try their vocation, and admit them if they persevered, among the sisters who then composed her community. Two years having been considered sufficiently long for this test, Sister Bourgeoys at the end of this period, judging them proper to be associated to her first companions, and live in the exercise of their special functions, wrote to the Vicar-General of Quebec, to inform him of all these circumstances, and requested to know whether, they were to be definitively received as Sisters of the Congregation, during the prelate's absence, or await his return. Mr. de Bernières answered, "We can do either one or the other, but perhaps it would be better to defer their reception, until his Lordship's return; as he has written to me about you and your community, which he seems to hold in high esteem, it would be well for him, to regulate all things himself, and make known to you his intentions, I trust that everything will succeed to the greater glory of God, for the good of souls, and your own particular consolation. Be assured that for my part, I shall ever be ready to assist you, in every possible way." The delay was not long. Bishop de Laval soon returned to Canada, and visited Sister Bourgeoys in her home at Ville-Marie, in June 1676. Seeing that his Lordship was so favorably disposed towards her Congregation, she requested him during this visit, to give them rules and instructions, whereby they might be guided in the fulfilment of their obligations, and at the same time, to grant his approval of their community, in

the quality of "Secular Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame," thus, excluding, by her demand, not only the solemn vows of religion, but particularly, the obligation of the cloister, which she considered incompatible with the functions of her institution. Bishop de Laval had unbounded confidence in Sister Bourgeoys' proceedings, and acceded to her request, with extreme kindness. Still more, on his return to Quebec, he addressed a pastoral letter to the faithful of his diocese, in terms, perfectly conformable to the desire, which Sister Bourgeoys had manifested; and after recalling the authorization given to her and to her companions, he concluded as follows: "Persuaded that the instruction and the education of youth, "are the greatest advantages we can procure to the church, "and at the same time, a most efficacious means for increasing "and preserving piety within Christian families; fully aware of "the numberless benedictions, which it pleased God to bestow, "so far, upon Sister Bourgeoys' labors, desiring to favor her "zeal, and to contribute towards all her pious designs, we "here give anew, our warmest approbation to her institution. "We allow her, and all those united with her, to form a community bearing the name of "Secular Daughters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame," observing the rules we shall lay "down for them, later. We authorize them to continue their "functions, not only on the island of Montreal, but elsewhere, "as we and our successors shall judge proper. Put for no "reason whatsoever, can they pretend in future to embrace the "religious life, this being directly opposed to our intention, "and to the good, we propose to accomplish, by their means: "the instruction of youth, in county parishes, conformable to "the letters granted by His Majesty the King of France, in "1671, to the said Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame." We have said that Sister Bourgeoys requested Bishop de Laval, to draw up a code of regulations, and daily observances for her Congregation; but, we must not infer from this, that the Sisters had lived together, for so many years, practising virtue according to their own particular views. No! Sister Bourgeoys' penetrating eye could well discover the extravagance of such a



life ; fully aware that without rules, there would be neither vocation, nor fidelity, and assisted by the ecclesiastics of St. Sulpice from the beginning of her institution, she had traced regulations, adapted to its spirit and to its obligations. It was thought, that after giving them a fair trial, his Lordship would modify them according to his ideas, and render them obligatory by a solemn approval. This was her intention, when she made known her request to Bishop de Laval, in 1676.

Sister Bourgeoys was in truth, the living rule of her Congregation, a model of the most sublime perfection, and each one of the Sisters, made it a duty to obey and imitate her. Their obligations so far, were familiar to the pious foundress, ever since the project of Mr. Jendret, project, frustrated in Troyes, to be realized in Montreal. To the three ordinary simple vows, they added a fourth : " The instruction of youth," and this rule in its beautiful simplicity and at the same time so perfect, prescribed the love of silence and retirement, perfect cordiality between the Sisters, work, spiritual lecture and prayer, frequentation of the sacraments, and edification to all around them. It was thus the Sisters lived, in the practice of these obligations, in awaiting the moment for their sanction. The hour had not yet come, though the holy Prelate was desirous of procuring them, this satisfaction. Many unforeseen circumstances caused several years to elapse, before the " Nunc Dimittis " gladdened Sister Bourgeoys' heart. In 1670, diocesan affairs called Bishop de Laval, again to Paris, where his stay was considerably prolonged. During this interval, difficulties accumulated, while an interior voice whispered unceasingly to the devoted Sister's ear, that the mission confided to her, by her heavenly Mother, would be incomplete, so long as no authorized rule, bound the Sisters to their Congregation. She feared for its future. Finally, after many an inward struggle, many an hour of pain and anguish, she resolved to brave, once more, the perils of ocean, seek her native land and renew her solicitations at the feet of her lawful Prelate. Other motives too, led her onward ; interior troubles, for which she could find no alleviation, and a desire to increase the number of her associates, to



supply the increasing wants of the country. A providential occasion soon presented itself.

"During the year 1679," writes Sister Bourgeoys, "Madam Perrot, wife of the Governor of Ville-Marie, was about starting for France. Our Sisters consented that I should accompany her, I pretexted our Rule and the presence of Bishop de Laval in Paris, though, perhaps my own interior crosses, were one of my real motives. We read that the resolution she took, to lay aside the burden of the superiority, before undertaking this journey, was prompted by these same interior trials; her deep humility leading her to think, that any other than herself, would fulfil this office, with more advantage to the community.

So, assembling her Sisters, she proposed to them, that they should elect another in her place. Hardly had the words escaped her lips, when they, without having made the slightest communication to each other, cried out simultaneously, "that they made choice of the Blessed Virgin, for their first Superior, their Guide and good Mother, for time and for eternity." Then, turning to Sister Bourgeoys, they begged, that she would be the representative of their heavenly Mother, and continue to govern the Congregation in her name and under her protection. Sister Bourgeoys heard the voice of God in their demand, and casting herself, with all the Sisters before the image of Our Blessed Lady, she recited aloud the following prayer, which came up spontaneously, from her inmost soul: "Look down, o most holy Virgin, upon this little band of thy devoted servants, who have consecrated themselves to the service of God, under thy special protection, and who desire to follow thee, as good children follow their Mother and Mistress. Thou wilt ever be considered by them, as their first Superior, and they trust that God will give thee, the government of a community, which is thy own creation. They have nothing, worthy to present to God, but hope to obtain by thy gracious intercession, all the graces necessary for their salvation and the perfection of their state of life. Thou knowest best their wants and what they should ask. Refuse

“ not thy powerful assistance ; through thy mediation, may they  
“ obtain light and grace from the Holy Spirit, so as to labor  
“ perfectly and faithfully, in the instruction of those confided  
“ to their care. Above all, O Mary, Queen and Mother, grant  
“ that all, teachers and children, as well as those who con-  
“ tribute, in any way, to the spiritual advancement of thine, may  
“ be of the number of the Elect; so that in thy society, all  
“ may be reunited one day, to praise and love God throughout  
“ eternity.”

It was in this manner, that Sister Bourgeoys submitted to the will of Heaven, and took once more, upon her shoulders, the responsibilities of government. Then providing for her Congregation, for the time of her absence, she bade an affectionate farewell, to the loved members of her community, and started for Quebec, to await the sailing of the vessel.

Soon after her arrival in this city, she received from her Ecclesiastical Superiors, the manuscript which contained the rules of the Congregation, as they had been observed, up to that time. On this occasion, she writes as follows, to Mr. Remy, of Saint Sulpice, upon whom the spiritual government of her institution devolved :

“ November 5th, 1679.

“ *Sir, and very dear Father,*

“ I have received the parcel containing your letters, the  
“ Rules, &c., and cannot say how grateful I feel towards God,  
“ for the interest, which He inspires you to take in our little  
“ community. I beg that He will bless all those, who are so  
“ kindly concerned in our welfare, and whose proceedings  
“ assure me, that we are indeed accomplishing the Divine  
“ Will. May our Blessed Mother assist us, in this and in every  
“ other undertaking.” .....

When Sister Bourgeoys returned to France, for the second time, to obtain a Charter for her Congregation, she did not consent to leave Canada, without having obtained, from her

civil and ecclesiastical Superiors, certificates concerning her work. As there was now question of compiling her rule, she thought it necessary, to renew this demand. In consequence, she writes to this same person, on this subject, a few days later : " With regard to the certificates, I obtained one from Mr. de Bernières, and another from the Solicitor-General. The latter was a source of displeasure to the Count de Frontenac, who says that the Solicitor had not the authority to give a certificate. F. D . . . informed me that he could say nothing to our advantage, because a word from him, would be productive of much trouble, and no service . . . . .

" Be that as it may, I shall try to follow your charitable directions, and shall preserve your letters, so as to be guided by them, at all times. Thanks, for your kindness, in offering and in causing our little undertaking to be offered to God. Allow me also, to remember here with gratitude, Mr. the Curate Bailly ; also MM. de Fremont et Seguenot, for their charity in our behalf. I have not yet answered the letter, received from Mr. Dollier de Casson, but promise to follow his advice, in all things. I accompanied Madam Perrot to the vessel this morning, to ascertain the exact time of departure, which will only be next Tuesday. We may possibly be delayed longer, we shall leave, however, when God pleases." Sister Bourgeoys was not deceived, the sailing of the vessel was again deferred, and in the interval, she wrote for the last time, before leaving Quebec :

" A few words to-day, to thank you for all the letters and the kind words, which your great charity prompted you to send me. I shall preserve them all ; for the instructions they contain, cannot fail to prove useful to me.

" With regard to the Sisters, act as you think best, and wait for the rule, since you prefer doing so. This will be a good pretext, to defer the reception of those that you think, require a little delay. I beg of you, dear Father, have yet a little patience, and you will assuredly witness some consoling changes. I hope for all this, from God's infinite mercy. Many thanks, for the blessings you wish me and ask for me."

The next news we have concerning Sister Bourgeoys, is after her arrival in Montreal. She tells us that she and Madam Perrot parted at Quebec; that she spoke of her interior troubles to a Capuchin friar, in this city, who restored her peace of mind; that upon reaching Paris, she hastened careworn and ill, to the house of her former friend, Miss de Bellevue; here she felt inclined to rest, but Mr. de Turmenie, the gentleman who transacted all business between France and Canada, apprized of her arrival, sent immediately two of his domestics, to conduct her to his own residence, where an apartment awaited her, and where she was treated, as if she had been the gentleman's own sister. "I remained there," writes Sister Bourgeoys, "until I had completely recovered my strength, after which I spent some time with the Sisters of the Cross, who lived in Saint Anthony street."

Sister Bourgeoys did not meet with the desired success. She left home in the firm hope, that the rules for her Congregation would be confirmed, that she could bring back with her, other companions to continue her work. God permitted that all these hopes should be frustrated, from the very beginning. "I called on Bishop de Laval," she writes, "to pay my respects and make known the motive of my journey. His Lordship seemed quite annoyed at my presence, and told me that I had done very wrong, to undertake this voyage, and that he was extremely averse to my taking back any young persons, with me to Montreal." "We cannot understand," writes the Sister's first historian, "why the Bishop of Quebec, seemed to disapprove of Sister Bourgeoys' conduct at this time, but certain it is, that notwithstanding his kindness and his liberal views, towards the Congregation, he had formed the design of incorporating her institution with that of the Ursulines of Quebec; soon after he made the proposition to the pious foundress. Notwithstanding these humiliations, Sister Bourgeoys continued for some time longer, to perfect, by every possible means, the rule destined for her community. She consulted several persons, who were fully competent to give her assistance; but, on account of Bishop de Laval's opposi-

tion and design, their influence availed but little. It was her hour of sacrifice and deep humiliation. Many an unkind look fell upon her ; many a harsh word fell cold and chilling upon her ear ; many a repulse met the zeal and devotedness, with which she accomplished, what she deemed, her duty. And withal, she was perfectly calm, there was about her an atmosphere of peaceful serenity.

"Her heart hath given  
"Birth to a courage and a faith,  
"As high as its devotion."

(HEMANS.)

## CHAPTER TWELFTH.

Sister Bourgeoys leaves France.—Her confidence in God calms the fears of those around her at Sea.—Other trials, burning of her convent.—Two of her Sisters, periah in the flames.—Her resignation in this hour of sacrifice.—The Ursulines again.—Sister Bourgeoys' firmness saves her Congregation.—Her words, when giving the 'Habit' of the Congregation to a Novice.—Bishop de Saint Vallier, second Bishop of Quebec.

So far, we have given our admiration, to Sister Bourgeoys' zeal and devotedness. We will now take another view of her virtue. We have seen that her journey to France, was full of disappointment ; but we know too, that the heroic Sister, had trod the paths of humiliation and sacrifice, for too long a time, to be vanquished by a contradiction. So, instead of yielding to discouragement, she gave herself up to brighter anticipations for the future. In her great faith, she looked upon these crosses, as " blessings in disguise." Deeming a longer stay in France, of little use either to herself, or to her community, she determined to profit of the first vessels to return to Canada. It was on this occasion, that Sister Bourgeoys became acquainted with Mr. Tronson, Superior of Saint Sulpice, in Paris. The potent charm which ever accompanies virtue, won for her a most devoted friend, in the person of this worthy ecclesiastic ; and from this moment, he evinced the deepest interest, in every thing connected with the Congregation. The numerous letters he addressed to Sister Bourgeoys, or to those who succeeded her, in the government of her community, are evident proofs of his devotedness to her institution. While in the vicinity of Saint Sulpice, vivid remembrances, of her old friend Mr. de Maisonneuve, must have haunted her memory ; his death had taken place, some two or three years before her arrival in France ; and though no mention is made in her memoirs, still, we think that a heart like Sister Bourgeoys, so keenly alive to the truest emotions of friendship, could not refrain from breathing a fare-

well prayer, to the memory of the great and good ; that she refused not, to cast a farewell glance, upon the tomb of her friend and protector, ere leaving for ever, the shores of her native land. It was then, that faithful to the promise, made to her Sisters, when leaving home, she engaged Louis Frin, (Mr. de Maisonneuve's old domestic), to return with her to Canada ; offer, which he accepted with a joyful heart. The two well springs of the old man's life were, Mr. de Maisonneuve, the first Governor of Ville-Marie, and Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation of Notre-Dame.

A few days later, Sister Bourgeoys and her charge, were on route, for La Rochelle, where the embarkation was to take place. She was accompanied by a certain number of young persons, sent to Ville-Marie, by the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. A sea voyage at this time, was extremely perilous. The English had gained possession of Acadia, for the fifth time, this was almost an open avowal of war, and hearts were ill at ease, when the two nationalities encountered each other at sea. However, anchor was raised, and trusting in Providence, strong arms unfurled the sails ; yielding to a favorable wind, the equipage left the shores of France. They had proceeded but half ways on this journey, when the Captain saw four English vessels in the distance. Terrified, he cried out " Sister Bourgeoys, we are lost ! pray, pray, with your companions ; but alas ! these fear stricken hearts had no strength to pray, and turning in their desolation towards Sister Bourgeoys, they exclaimed, " Sister ! Sister," what will become of us, if we are taken ? seemingly unmoved, she answered : " Well, if the vessel is captured, we will go either to England or to Holland, and we shall find God there, as elsewhere." Her peaceful assurance, restored perfect calm and hope, all knelt there and prayed. It was Sunday, there was a clergyman on board, and preparations were immediately made to celebrate the August Sacrifice, though the vessels drew near guided by a favorable wind.

Two hours later, they were out of sight, and the entire equipage, having heard Mass, returned thanks to Heaven, and the deep chorus of the *Te Deum*, rolled out upon the waters. The



Captain of the vessel, enchanted with Sister Bourgeoys' virtue, endeavored to prevail upon her to eat at his table, but she constantly refused ; however, he provided her with the best of every thing, giving her thereby, an opportunity to exercise her charity, in favor of those most in need. This was Sister Bourgeoys' last journey to France ; journey replete with humiliation and fatigue, but no doubt, enriched with innumerable blessings. From this moment, her community increased like the grain of mustard seed. And its happy members, blessed, praised and magnified the names of Jesus and of Mary. Soon after her arrival, Sister Marie Barbier, the first of Ville-Marie's daughters, who entered a community, was allowed to pronounce her vows, according to the formula, then in use. The year following, six others made their profession, which gives us, in this year 1681, eighteen professed Sisters of the Congregation. All of whom had been formed by Sister Bourgeoys, to the practice of solid virtue. The six last were her pupils and had been confided to her care, from their most tender years. They were

Sister Marie Denis,

" Madeleine Bourbeault,

" Marie Charly,

" Françoise Lemoyne,

" Catherine Charly,

" Catherine Bony.

In awaiting the moment, which would give her the assurance, that her rules and constitutions had met with the Bishop's approval, the worthy foundress had a heavy cross to bear. So far, Heaven's visible Providence had accompanied her, had encouraged every undertaking. But now, the fruit of her past labor, was to appear for a moment upon the brink of ruin ; so that her heroic virtue might appear, with a tenfold lustre. Trials and crosses, such as are offered to those only, who walk in the foot steps of the Divine Crucified, fell heavily upon her careworn frame. Three years only, after her return from France, her trust in Providence was put to a cruel test ; her

convent and every thing around it, that could be destroyed, was reduced to ashes, during the night of December 6th, 1683. It was a sad, sad, moment for Sister Bourgeoys, to see perish thus, in her presence, the fruit of her toils, privations and sacrifices. This conflagration, so sudden and so violent, prevented the sisters, from saving the slightest article. Every thing was destroyed; and to this accident is due, the loss of many precious documents, concerning the first years of the Congregation. This destruction so complete, the loss of a home and earthly goods, were little, less than nothing, when compared with the loss of two accomplished sisters, who perished in the flames. Sister Geneviève Durosoy, Assistant, and Sister Margaret Soumillard, niece to the worthy foundress. Sister Bourgeoys' heart, was pierced with sorrow, and in this moment of poignant anguish, she raised submissively the bitter chalice to her lips, and drank even to the dregs. She regretted the loss of these Sisters, not so much through a natural motive, though she loved them dearly; but rather, from that higher appreciation, of their great ability to procure God's glory, in their respective functions; she considered herself the cause of these misfortunes, and writes: "I am justly punished, for having yielded so easily, when there was question of building a new house; the act was not conformable to the spirit of poverty, humility and mortification, which should ever characterize the members of our Congregation. We should have been contented, with the slight inconveniences of our former dwelling." Another time, speaking of this circumstance, she says: "For my part, this accident, so far as the house is concerned, gave me more joy than sorrow, because of the reasons that had caused its erection."

The citizens of Ville-Marie, Sister Bourgeoys' friends in France, and elsewhere, gave evident proofs of their sincere affection and sympathy on this occasion. *Monseigneur* M<sup>r</sup>. de Laval, Bishop of Quebec, writes as follows, to Mr. Dollier de Casson, of Saint Sulpice: "This sad accident has afflicted me deeply, and I sincerely regret the loss of the two virtuous Sisters, who perished in the flames. They were ripe for Heaven, though

"humanly speaking, necessary to their Congregation. God's judgments are different from ours, and for this reason we bow submissively, and adore the decrees of His Divine Providence. I have written a few lines to our good and afflicted Sister Bourgeoys."

The pious foundress in the meantime, was a perfect model of heroic resignation. She gazed, for a moment, upon the smoking ruins, of her twenty years' labor; dropped a tear upon the calcinated bones, of the loved ones, who had perished there, breathed an act of perfect submission to the Divine Will, then left the spot. Trials, we have said, never come alone; Sister Bourgeoys had most assuredly a double portion. The utter privation, to which the Congregation was now reduced, brought back to Bishop de Laval, his former idea of associating it, to the Ursulines of Quebec. His Lordship was firmly persuaded, that the former institution was ruined for ever; humanly speaking, there was no possibility of reestablishing another house, when funds and materials were alike wanting. So the good Bishop thought; and after all, should they succeed in repairing this loss, many years must necessarily elapse, before the Congregation recovered its former prosperity. Consequently, he determined, to make the proposition to Sister Bourgeoys.

Ah! he knew not the depth of her confidence in God!

In the meantime we shall see, what strength and trusting energy, God gives to those, who rely on His omnipotent Providence. Notwithstanding Sister Bourgeoys' profound humility, she understood full well, that her ideas must be conformable, to the designs of Heaven, upon her institution; and for this reason, she should provide a house sufficiently large, for the exercise of its respective functions. Being then in the necessity of reconstructing her convent, she resolved to build it, upon a piece of land, which was at a short distance, in what was then called, the Upper Town: site actually occupied by the Congregation. This piece of land, was of considerable extent, and had been partially cultivated up to this time, to supply the wants of the community. Totally deprived of every

other human support, of the pecuniary resources indispensable for the undertaking, neither furniture, linen, nor provisions; but with that superhuman energy that baffles difficulty, fatigue and poverty, she set to work, and in order to draw down God's blessing upon the enterprise, she and her daughters, signed an act, worthy their religious fervor. "We have signed an act," she writes, "wherein we have made a formal promise to God, signifying, that if we rebuild our house, it is only to practise more faithfully in future, evangelical poverty."

Heaven could not resist their fervent appeal, and inspired the fulfilment of many generous actions in their favor. Every heart, in the little city of Ville-Marie, was moved at the sight of Sister Bourgeoys' confidence and devotedness, and all were powerfully inclined in favor of her Congregation. The Marquis de Denonville, in his dispatches to Court, says: "The convent of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, under the direction of Sister Bourgeoys, which has been a source of immense good to the colony, from its very foundation, has been completely destroyed by fire; not a single article was saved, so prompt and so violent was the conflagration. It is necessary to rebuild their house, but they have nothing to commence with." Mr. Tronson, of Saint Sulpice, also interceded in their behalf, but they only obtained from Court, the small allowance of five hundred livres. God, no doubt, permitted this, to prove that He alone, was the Protector and the Support of this community. He gave to the pious Sister the means, to erect a stone house, of ample dimensions, and better adapted to the wants of their external classes and boarding-school. Before the new building was completed, Bishop Laval had matured his plans, for uniting the two communities, of which we have already spoken, and he now made the final proposition to Sister Bourgeoys. The remembrance of the manifold graces, received from divine munificence; the assurance given by her heavenly Mother, "Go, and I will never abandon you," gave her strength in this hour of trial. Calm and serene, as when praying at the foot of His Altar, she listened to the Prelate's intentions, and though the pious foundress, was unsurpassed,

in submission to her lawful Superiors, still, on this occasion, she thought it her duty, to represent to His Lordship, that the peculiar spirit of her Congregation, was incompatible with the rule of another; above all, with a cloistered community.

She felt that she could not take upon herself, the responsibility of such an act. Still more, the Blessed Virgin to whom her institution was specially consecrated, had given evident proofs of the love she bore it. Then, besides the sanctification of young girls, which was its main project, she had other views for the good of young persons, who, deprived of the advantages that her Congregation offered, would be prevented from consecrating themselves to God. She added: "There are many young women in the different conditions of life, who, distinguished for their virtue and talent, are nevertheless but little favored by the gifts of fortune, and consequently unable to offer the dowry, that most religious houses exact, and for this reason, are deprived of the benefits and graces, attached to a religious vocation. My intention would be to open wide, the doors of the Congregation to these persons, and I esteem riches so lightly, that I would consent to seek out, and bring in on my own shoulders; a young person, who with poverty, had a good will and a true vocation." Bishop de Laval, penetrated with esteem and veneration for Sister Bourgeoys' virtue, insisted no further, and abandoned the future of the Congregation to Divine Providence; so much the more as he was preoccupied at this moment, about resigning his Episcopal See, into younger, and as his humility would have it, into abler hands. With views so pure and so disinterested, Sister Bourgeoys could not fail to succeed, and the privations to which the Congregation was reduced, became a powerful stimulant to many generous young hearts of Ville-Marie, who, won by the heroism and the virtues of Margaret Bourgeoys and her incomparable companions, cast far from them the deceitful joys of life, and like Magdalen sought the "one thing necessary." Some time after in 1685, M<sup>r</sup>. de Saint-Vallier, second Bishop of Quebec, arrived in Canada, and paid his first visit to the Congregation, this same year. On this occasion, Sister Bour-

geys presented forty sisters to his Lordship, "to whom," she said, "I never promised anything but poverty and simplicity." It was indeed so, and upon these solemn occasions, when a young candidate knelt, to receive from her hands, the "Habit of the Congregation," she would repeat again and again, "My dear child ! love simplicity, humility and poverty."

"Those who wish to become members of this community," she would often say to her young aspirants, "must be firmly resolved to abandon the principles of the world ; to live in the spirit of perfect renunciation of self, and all things earthly ; to seek only the glory of God ; to be entirely devoted to the instruction of young girls ; to the constant practice of all good works, without murmuring at the pain, trouble and humiliation, which are inseparable from these, but learn and love to imitate the Blessed Virgin's life of simplicity and retirement in all things." She would tell them, "On their missions, to walk in the footsteps of the Apostles ; to perform their journeys, on foot when possible ; to earn their bread by the labor of their hands, and be a burden to none. In their community, and on mission, to have only the simplest, poorest, and most indispensable furniture ; to wear common clothing, and eat the coarsest food." This was her rule for others, but sweet and agreeable, when compared to her own mode of living, of which we shall speak later. Let us now return to Bishop de Saint-Vallier. He had not been long in Canada, when he found out, that rumor had no ways exaggerated the marvels, accomplished by Sister Bourgeoys' institution ; and some time after, when publishing the relation of his voyage to Ville-Marie, he gave vent to his admiration in the following terms : "It is wonderful, how the Congregation has managed to subsist since the accident, which took place two or three years ago. The Sisters lost everything belonging to them, in the space of one night. The flames which destroyed their community, spread so rapidly, that they could save neither furniture, clothes, nor papers ; and were only too happy to escape themselves. Notwithstanding, two of their sisters perished in the conflagration. Those who were so fortunate as to escape,



"were sustained by superhuman strength. Divine Providence  
"watched over them, and provided for their most pressing  
"necessities ; and indeed, it would seem, as if this calamity had  
"only served to render them more virtuous, and more useful  
"to their neighbor, for ever since that event, they have been  
"less than ever, strangers to every good work." Sister Morin  
of the Hôtel-Dieu, adds : "The second convent of the Con-  
"gregation, which was built of stone, having been destroyed by  
"the fire of 1683, Sister Bourgeoys built a third, on the site,  
"which the Sisters still occupy to-day. It is spacious and one  
"of the best constructed houses in the city."

No wonder, that God loved to assist His confiding child.  
It was not for herself, nor for her own gratification, that she toiled  
and prayed. She knew that she was a chosen instrument to  
perform a special work. This work, was God's own work ; she  
willed His will. He had said : "Confide in me, and I will  
satisfy your hearts' desires." How then despair ? How then  
despair ? The child of Providence from her earliest years ;  
assurances, visible, incontestable proofs of God's protection,  
had been showered with profusion upon her. Why, then, at  
the close of a long life, should her confidence fail ? her faith in  
His promises weaken ? "Consider the ravens, for they sow  
"not, neither do they reap, neither have they store-house, nor  
"barn, and God feedeth them. How much are you more  
"valuable than they ?" (St. Luke, Chapter XII, v. XXIV.)

And again : "The Lord hath said, 'if you had faith like unto  
"a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this mulberry tree,  
"be thou rooted up, and be thou transplanted into the seas ;  
"and it would obey you." (St. Luke, Chap. XIV, v. VI.)



## CHAPTER THIRTEENTH.

(The mission of the mountain.—~~Sisters~~.—Encouragement given by the King.)—Marie Barbe Attentimon and Marie Therese Ganensagouas, the Iroquois Sisters.—Sister Marie Barbier.—The old stone towers.—Other missions.—How the Sisters lived in these missions.—The House of Providence in Quebec.—Sister Bourgeoys opens parochial schools in Quebec.—Holy Thursday.—Confidence in God rewarded.

"Go forth and teach; and ye went forth and taught  
Deeds, that will shine, when thou art dark, O Sun!"

(MONTGOMERY.)

Few details remain, concerning the first missions, established by Sister Bourgeoys. The almost incessant wars, between the colonists and the Iroquois, were not unfrequently a drawback, to the zealous intentions of the pious foundress. Her works of love, were oftentimes suspended, and when the wily Savage, was seen prowling around the settlers habitations, each and all were obliged to act upon the defensive. One of the principal motives, which had drawn Sister Bourgeoys to Canada, was the desire of gaining souls to God, by the sanctification of youth; but as the different tribes, were, for more than twenty years, without forming any fixed settlement on the island of Montreal, but little could be done for them, if we except a few children, who were given to Mr. de Maisonneuve by their parents. Sister Bourgeoys tells us, that when he planted the cross on Mount Royal's summit, in 1642, all those who could leave their habitations without exposing their lives, made pilgrimages to the spot, and addressed there, many fervent supplications to Heaven for the conversion of the different tribes. These disinterested hearts were not destined, to witness the realization of their desires here below, for when Miss Manse died, in 1673, none had as yet, become stationary. The Indian's restless independence, and hostile inclinations, gave but little efficacy to their charitable efforts; but some years later, a certain number of

Iroquois, who had been converted to christianity, manifested a desire to fix themselves in the vicinity of Ville-Marie ; and during the year 1676, the members of Saint Sulpice, founded an establishment in their favor at the mountain, " and this was the first mission," Sister Bourgeoys tells us, " where the indians came of their own accord to be instructed. At the same time, the venerable Sister, sent two of her companions, to commence a mission for the children of the mountain. Mr. de Belmont, of Saint Sulpice, constructed at his own expense, a little chapel, which bore the name of "Our Lady of the Snows," and around this modest sanctuary, a little indian village arose, as if by magic. The bark wigwams peeping through the trees ; the picturesque costumes of joyous youth, presented no uncouth appearance. Here the Sisters dwelt, and exercised their functions in their little bark cabins, and here on the mountain side, at twilight hour, the deep chorus of the "Ave Maris Stella," or some other hymn to the Virgin, told the passer by that,

" From morn till eve' a hum arose, above the maple trees,  
A hum of harmony and praise, from Sister Margaret's bees.

Egyptian hue, and speech uncouth, grew fair and sweet when won,  
To sing the song of Mary, and to serve her Saviour Son.

The courier halted on his path, the sentry on his round,  
And barehead, blessed the holy nun, who made it holy ground."

(D'ARCY MCGEE.)

To obtain greater success, in the plan of education adopted for these children, Sister Bourgeoys willed, that the Sister Missionaries of the mountain, should take special care of those among their pupils, who evinced dispositions for virtue ; so that, rescued from the baneful influence of their parents, they might become, more easily, accustomed to the french manner of living. Delighted with the happy results obtained, Mr. Tronson, writes from Paris to Mr. de Belmont, May 30th, 1681.

" You receive no doubt, great assistance, from the Sisters of the Congregation, for the instruction of your young indian girls. With regard to the one thousand livres, assigned to them, by his Majesty, Sister Bourgeoys is perfectly free, to

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“employ this sum as she thinks proper, should the Sisters remain at the mountain, or return to Ville-Marie ; this gratification being given to allow them full liberty, with regard to these children, without any other condition being laid down ; and as their occupations, are carried on in both places, they can apply a part of this sum to each locality, or place it entirely there, where most assistance is required.” The labors and privations of these first Sister missionaries, were crowned with benedictions.

These children were taught the principles of our holy faith, reading, writing, a knowledge of the french language ; in a word, all those branches, necessary and becoming their sex. We read : “ That Louis the XIVth delighted and encouraged by these promising results, and wishing to give the devoted Sister, all the means necessary for realizing the good, she anticipated, granted another annuity of 2,000 ; livres, 1,000 of which, was destined to purchase yarn and thread, so that these children, might learn to spin, to knit, besides various kinds of needle work.” It was an arduous task, to lead these young girls of the forest onward, step by step, towards civilization ; Sister Bourgeoys felt the responsibility that devolved upon her, and more than once, her sanguine expectations, gave place to fear and uneasiness. Notwithstanding, she embraced the good work with heart and soul. Heaven blessed her endeavors, and she soon understood, that the sanctification of these forest children, was a mission specially reserved for her Congregation (1). From this moment, every action of the pious foundress, was a hymn of thanksgiving, for the happy results obtained. When she beheld these poor indian girls, attracted so forcibly to the practice of virtue, and yielding so submissively to the exigency of time and place, her whole soul gave way to transports of joy, and in unison with the heavenly authoress of that most sublime of Canticles, she exclaimed.

(1) This mission of the mountain, opened in favor of young Indian girls, by Sister Bourgeoys, in 1676, was the first, founded on the island of Montreal ; but anterior to this, the Venerable Mother, Mary of the Incarnation, had gathered around her, the children of the various indian tribes. We can trace her heroism and devotedness, as far back as 1660.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my heart hath rejoiced  
"in God my Saviour."

Soon after his arrival in 1685, Bishop de la Croix de Saint-Vallier, visited the Sisters in their mission at the mountain, and referring to this subject at a later period, he says: "The  
"Sisters of the Congregation who are spread throughout the  
"colony, have opened a school at the mountain, where some  
"forty indian girls are brought up, according to the french  
"mode of living. These young persons, are taught our religion, the hymns of the church, and pray, both in their  
"mother tongue and in the french language; and so perfectly  
"have they been gained to our faith, that they are not only  
"able to put all its observances into practice, but at the same  
"time, follow most scrupulously, the slightest rule of the Congregation. Some have even expressed a willingness, to  
"consecrate themselves irrevocably to God. This last desire,  
"however, will not be realized for some time, a long trial  
"being absolutely necessary beforehand. The population of  
"this village, at the mountain, is composed of Hurons and  
"Iroquois, who are not only converted, but are really remarkable for their fervor. They have been assembled here,  
"by the gentlemen of Saint Sulpice, who watch over them,  
"with the greatest zeal and care. They live as within a  
"cloister, and practice virtue admirably. Whenever, you  
"visit their little chapel, you invariably see some of their  
"number engaged in prayer; they never speak within its  
"precincts, and many, after the commission of even a trifling  
"fault, punish themselves by remaining outside, or kneeling at  
"the door, in a spirit of humility and penance. They apply  
"themselves, wonderfully, to the preservation of their innocence, and when they have made known their wants to  
"God, with that charming simplicity which characterizes them,  
"they return to their domestic labors, and during this time,  
"their cabins and the fields around, repeat sweet echoes from  
"their hymns and canticles. Mr. Belmont has taken  
"charge of the little boys, and the Sisters of the Congregation  
"see to the girls."

But some of their dearest consolations, in this mission of the mountain, came from the edifying lives, led by the young girls of the Iroquois nation. Two of these, in particular, merit our attention, because they gave themselves to God without reserve, and died fervent members of Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation. The worthy foundress tells us, "that the first, named Mary " Barbara Attontinon, was born in the little indian village of " Onontague ; some time after her baptism, she was given to " the Sisters. As she advanced in years, her angelic virtues " gained all hearts. She entered our community, took the " habit, and pronounced the formula, in use among the Sisters, " at that time. She remained with us twelve years, and died " in our midst, at the age of thirty-five. We buried her, the " 27th of November, 1691, in the Parish Church of Notre- " Dame, Ville-Marie."

The other young girl bore the name of Gannensagouas ; she was one of the first pupils of the Congregation. Governor de Courcelles, took great interest in her welfare, and confided her to Sister Bourgeoys' care. Baptized at the age of fourteen, she received the name of Mary-Theresa, in honor of the Queen of France. Governor de Courcelles, had remitted at different times, sums to the amount of one thousand livres, for her education, which he desired to be complete. But the young girl seemed not to care for the joys and pleasures of an uncertain future. Won by the examples of virtue, upon which her eyes daily rested, Mary-Theresa soon manifested a desire, to imitate her worthy teachers, and after many solicitations, she finally received permission to take her place among the Sisters. She was in her seventeenth year, and gave for her dowry, at the time she pronounced her vows, the sum of three thousand and ninety-five livres, capital of the one thousand livres, given by Governor de Courcelles, for her education, which Sister Bourgeoys' intelligence and good management, had increased to this amount. Some time after her profession, Sister Mary-Theresa, was sent to instruct the young girls of her nation, at the mountain. She had learned to speak and to write the french language, and was thereby enabled to render

greater service, to those confided to her care. The virtues of modesty, interior recollection and mortification, shone conspicuously, in this young Sister. In her twenty-seventh year, she fell into a decline, which brought her gradually to the tomb. She died at the mountain, the 25th of November, 1685, aged twenty-eight years, and was interred in the little sanctuary, where she had first lisped the names of Jesus and Mary. Scenes, such as these, came from time to time, to beautify and enliven the dim landscapes, of their every day life ; and when one heart, had been gained to the knowledge and the love of its Creator, the Sisters felt amply compensated for all their troubles and privations. Formed at the school of Margaret Bourgeoys, they were early taught, that the road, which leads to true happiness, though rugged and thorny in appearance, is nevertheless rendered smooth and easy, by the practice of virtue. Let us listen, dear reader, to one of these fervent missionaries, as she depicts her sentiments, with regard to their manner of living at the mountain. Sister Marie Barbier, of Ville-Marie, was one of Sister Bourgeoys' first pupils, and at the same time, the first Canadian admitted, as member of her institution. She copied most perfectly, the pious examples of her teacher and foundress. "In 1685," she tells us : "I was sent to the mission of the mountain. A small bark cabin had been prepared for my dwelling, the walls of which, were profusely ornamented, with pictures and images of the Infant Jesus. Everything was in perfect order and neatness. But oh ! the sight of so much comfort grieved me, and my poor heart could only give utterance to this little prayer : 'O my God ! you surely did not destine this place for me ! I shall have nothing to suffer here, and indeed I would rather die, than be so much at my ease.' I slept there but one night, having received orders to go to another mission, on the island of Orleans, near Quebec. Sister Ann, who was to be my companion, came for me to the mountain. Upon entering my cabin, she exclaimed : Surely, Sister, it cannot be the will of God that you should remain here ! I am sorry to see you so comfortably lodged, and your apartment so



"nicely decorated. Do not forget, that we must live in the midst of privations, here below, 'and indeed,' adds the Sister, her words were conformable to my inclination. The Sister, with whom I had been first named, was extremely grieved, on account of this change, and almost insisted, that I should remain with her; but I answered that I would much rather obey at once, and that God would be most merciful, even if He permitted me to die of cold, fatigue and privation in my distant mission. I returned then to our community, and started two days later, for the island of "Orleans." This ~~now~~ <sup>former</sup> recital, gives us an exact idea of the spirit of poverty and mortification, with which the pious foundress inspired her daughters. These little bark wigwams, we are told, were of the poorest and the simplest kind, and those who inhabited them, were constantly exposed to all the inclemencies of the weather. In 1694, their little village which was build of wood, was entirely destroyed by fire, with its church and fort. Mr. de Belmont constructed a stone fortress, the remains of which, are still extant. Should you visit Montreal, dear reader, do not fail to walk up Saint Catherine street, in the direction of the mountain; there, in front of the magnificent edifice, known as the "Grand Seminary of Saint Sulpice," stand two stone towers, whitened with age; one of which, served as a residence for the Sister missionaries of the mountain, and in the other, they taught their school and formed the young indian girls, until the year 1701, when their mission was transferred to "Sault-au-Récollet." The Sisters remained here until 1720, at which time they removed to the "Lake of the Two Mountains," where they still continue the labors, first commenced at the mountain in 1676 mission, which has been confided to their care, for the space of two hundred years and more.

When we take into consideration, the state of the colony at that time; when we reflect upon the inconveniences of travelling, we can easily imagine the sufferings and privations, which the Sisters endured, in the exercise of their respective functions. We read in Sister Bourgeoys' memoirs, "that these first sister



"missionaries, had neither bed nor bedding, and in order to imitate more perfectly the Apostles, they worked hard to earn their bread, and withal," she adds, "we succeeded." And why should they not succeed? God could not refuse to shower down, His choicest blessings, upon their labors of love and devoted zeal. He could not, but multiply a thousand fold, the merits of those, who were ready at any moment to brave humiliation and suffering, for His glory and for His love. How could they be otherwise than fervent, when, exchanging the Mother House, for some isolated mission, they heard fall from the lips of their venerable Mother, these words: "Remember, my dear child, that in leaving for mission, you are going to gather up the scattered drops of Our Lord's most Precious Blood. Oh! how happy a sister missionary should be, to think that she is travelling in God's company, and in obedience to His holy Will. How happy to think, that this sacrifice gives her an opportunity of testifying her gratitude to Him, from whom she receives all. In His company, what can be difficult or painful? Oh! who would not wish to be bereft of every earthly consideration and consolation for His love; to be abandoned by the world, to suffer torments and die in ignominy. She should never give way to trouble or blame, but prepare to procure God's glory, by serving her neighbor, and by accepting with submission the manifold mortifications and crosses, which must be inevitably encountered in the practice of virtue." We shall see later, that these instructions were put faithfully into practice, for Sister Barbier tells us "that, in the mission of the island of Orleans, humiliations were not wanting." To extend her zeal, more efficaciously, to the children of the French colonists, who were now settled in the different parishes around Ville-Marie, and even farther, Sister Bourgeoys opened several other missions, and nothing contributed more to the good of souls and the growth of devotion. When those, who held the reins of government, had witnessed the astonishing fruits, which resulted from the labors of the Sister Missionaries of the Congregation, they did not fail to proclaim far and wide, the utility of Sister Bourgeoys' insti-

tution. One of these, Mr. de Meulles, pays the following tribute to their zeal and virtue, in a letter written to one of his Majesty's ministers, in 1683. "The good accomplished by the Sisters of the Congregation is incredible. They are employed in teaching and in forming young girls, in every direction, and in the most satisfactory manner. It would be a great blessing could we disperse them, in numerous other places. Their lives are admirable, and far more to be appreciated, than if they were cloistered. Their way of acting, their prudence, render them most exemplary, and enable them to go in every direction, to instruct young persons, who would otherwise remain in the grossest ignorance."

At this same period, Bishop de Laval renders the following testimony to their virtue and zeal.

"Besides the schools for young girls, located in the city of Montreal, besides their boarding-school, where these young persons are brought up, in the sentiments of deep and sincere piety; the Congregation has other schools established in various parts of the country, where the children are not only taught their catechism, but where older persons of their sex, receive moral training and useful instruction. So far, the Sisters have perfectly accomplished every undertaking." Later, Mother Juchereau of the Hôtel-Dieu, Quebec, tells us, that Sister Bourgeoys, in founding the establishment of the Congregation, has raised one of the most flourishing communities in Canada, the good odor of which extends throughout the entire country, and operates unheard of good, in the different parishes, where they have opened missions, which they conduct with the most edifying fervor and regularity." Few details remain, concerning these first missions, which were established in the vicinity of Montreal, but we are well aware, that Sister Bourgeoys' zeal had extended, far beyond its borders, in 1676.

X In 1683, Mr. Lamy, curate of the island of Orleans, struck with admiration at the fruits of zeal, produced far and wide, by the Sisters of the Congregation, desired to have a branch of their institution in his parish, and begged of Bishop de Saint-

himself

Vallier, to make this request to Sister Bourgeoys himself. In a temporal point of view, the proposition was not very engaging; there being no means of subsistence for the missionaries; still, without a moment's hesitation, the mission was accepted, two sisters chosen, who putting their trust in Providence, started for their destination, where trials of every kind awaited them. Numberless opportunities, for doing good, presented themselves. Sister Barbier tells us, that before starting, she wished to prepare herself as if for death, and was entirely unconcerned about temporal matters.

"It was about the middle of November, the weather was as cold as in the depth of winter, and we had but a simple coverlet for both. I actually thought, we should freeze during this journey; and I felt happy to think, that at last, I was beginning to suffer. Humiliations were not wanting, our entire baggage consisted of a small parcel, which we carried very easily; and for this, every species of mocking was ours. The people came around us, asking what had become of our furniture. Some said that we were dying of hunger at home, and were obliged to seek fortune elsewhere. No dwelling had been prepared for us, and the cold was intense; consequently, we were obliged to remain in a private family, and perform our spiritual exercises, as best we could; as I had never lived among people in the world, this place was to me, like an infernal abode. We lived almost continually with men and women, and took our meals, as best we could, in their midst. The church was more than a mile distant, and each time, that we went there, we came back covered with ice and snow. On one occasion, coming home from Mass, during a violent snow storm, I fell into a ditch, covered with ice and snow; my companion was at a short distance before me, and perfectly unconscious of my position. The storm continued, and there I remained, praying the Holy Infant Jesus to assist me, if I should live for His glory, and do penance for my sins. The extremity of my head-dress was all that appeared; its black color led the people to suppose, that some of their cattle had fallen

"into the ditch, and on this account, they came quickly, and  
"drew me out with considerable difficulty ; but seeing that I  
"did not belong to them, they left me there, and I reached  
"the house, as best I could. This accident, with several other  
"inconveniences, was cause of my contracting infirmities ; but  
"provided, they are conducive to God's glory, and serve to  
"humble my pride, I shall esteem myself too happy. God  
"overwhelms me with His mercies, may He be eternally  
"blessed." No parish in Canada was, perhaps, more in want  
of spiritual assistance, than that of the "Holy Family," on the  
island of Orleans. A spirit of indevotion and frivolity, pre-  
vailed to an alarming extent, among the younger portion of the  
population. The House of God was not unfrequently pro-  
faned, on account of the dangerous conversations held therein,  
while the poor Sisters were oftentimes treated as objects of  
contempt. But when did charity, patience, and mildness fail  
to surmount an obstacle ? The young girls of this parish were  
soon gained, by the influence which virtue invariably exercises,  
thereby proving the truth of this assertion : "First gain youth,  
and the salvation of the nation is assured." An external Con-  
gregation was opened, spiritual conferences established, and  
thanks to the zeal of these Sister Missionaries, the parish of  
the "Holy Family" assumed a more cheering aspect, and some  
months later, the devotion to the three members of the Holy  
Family was introduced. Within a number of years, an exces-  
sive fondness for dress, the use of unbecoming toilets had crept  
into all classes of society. To prevent, or at least, diminish  
these abuses, Bishop de Laval forbade the priests of his diocese,  
to allow any one to approach the sacraments in an unsuitable  
attire. But, alas ! this prohibition availed but little, for in  
1686, there was more license and scandal than ever. Heaven  
wished, no doubt, to reserve this conquest, for the Sisters of the  
Congregation, in return for their labors, and for the holy  
motives that inspired them. The sentiments of piety, which  
they knew so well how to communicate to youth, obtained the  
desired result. It was the 12th of June, 1686, the eve of Cor-  
pus Christi ; the day chosen by the young girls of this parish, to

make the sacrifice of their vanity and wordliness. They assembled and formed in concert a resolution, to exclude ever after, certain superfluous ornaments, which they had always persisted in wearing, up to this time. To seal solemnly their pious intention, they placed all their jewels and finery, at the foot of Mary's altar; and the next morning, assisted at Mass, and joined in the procession, in a simple and modest attire, to the great surprise and edification of all those who saw them. Several of these young persons, appreciated so deeply and so sincerely the heroic devotedness of the Sisters, that walking in their footsteps, they generously abandoned the false joys which had captivated them so far, and consecrated their lives to God's service, in Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation, becoming in their turn, the Apostles of those, upon whom, they had before exercised their baneful influence, by means of bad example. The surrounding parishes had their own advantages on these occasions, for these examples produced the most salutary results; and no doubt, Sister Bourgeoys' visits contributed, as much as anything else, to excite their fervor, and at the same time, retain the Sisters, in the primitive spirit of their vocation, above all, in familiarity, poverty and mortification.

We have already remarked, that when Bishop de LaCroix, de Saint Vallier, visited Ville-Marie, he was singularly edified by the piety and fervor, that reigned among the inmates of the "House of Providence," where Sister Bourgeoys had gathered together, a number of poor grown up girls, and furnished them with the means of obtaining an honest livelihood. Appreciating the good achieved by this work, he desired at once a similar institution for the city of Quebec, and judging that the Sisters of the Congregation, whose endeavors had been blessed by God, were alone, competent to succeed in this undertaking, he wrote to Sister Bourgeoys, offering her at the same time, the direction of the proposed establishment, for the purpose of which, he had bought a house and garden. The zealous foundress accepted the mission, and placed it under the superintendence of Sister Marie Barbier, who was recalled from the mission of the "Holy Family". Bishop de Saint Vallier was not deceived

in his expectations, and never perhaps did a more sensible heavenly blessing, accompany an earthly undertaking. This first success, gave birth to other desires, and wishing to favor the poorer class, with the inestimable advantage, of a religious education, the zealous Prelate, made a second demand to Sister Bourgeoys. Ever ready to procure others, the means for acquiring virtue, she acquiesced most willingly, to his Lordship's request, and soon after, opened parochial schools in the city of Quebec, similar to those already established at Ville-Marie. These events marked 1688. Encouraged by these results, and by the blessings, which came in their train, Bishop de Saint Vallier, was induced to found another establishment, the following year 1689, which he destined to be a source of more general utility. His plan was to open an asylum, similar to those, established in France, and known as General Hospitals, where the outcast members of society could find a home, be usefully employed, and thereby, be prevented from returning to the ways of sin. He again made choice of the Sisters of the Congregation, to cooperate with him in this good work. Consequently, in the spring of this same year, 1689, he wrote to Sister Bourgeoys, to meet him, in Quebec, as he wished to confer with her, on this subject. The Prelate's desires, were no sooner made known to the worthy Sister, than laying aside, her cares and responsibilities, she undertook the then perilous journey to Quebec. You are aware dear reader, that as far back as 1689, travelling conveniences were unheard of. The swift locomotive, and the more agreeable steamboat, had not as yet, made their appearance, and the journey of sixty leagues, from Montreal to Quebec, was at that time, considered a lengthy trip.

Sister Bourgeoys, had never been conquered by a difficulty, and though the rivers were frozen, or covered with floating ice, she wended her willing steps, towards the spot, designed by her Bishop, in a spirit of prompt obedience.

In this, her seventieth year, she leaves her community on foot, and finally 'mid ice, snow and water, she reaches Quebec, giving thereby touching proofs of her humility, her poverty,



and her deep mortification. This was her ordinary way of travelling in winter, and if during the other seasons of the year, circumstances compelled her to make use of the boats and canoes, customary on these occasions, each journey was a veritable mission, in favor of those who were fortunate enough, to be in her company, and to whom she gave many touching examples of virtue.

Bishop ~~de~~ Saint-Yallier, expressed his ideas on the subject of their meeting, and though the pious Sister saw full well, that this enterprise was incompatible with the spirit and the rule of her institution, still, she entered at once into his views, and gave herself up, to the most laborious and humiliating actions, in order to accomplish his desires. Going so far, as to bear upon her own shoulders, the furniture, the materials and the utensils needful for the new establishment. And, when these hours of painful labor, closed the first days of "Holy Week," where do you think, dear reader, she sought repose and rest? Listen, 'tis the evening of "Holy Thursday." Recollected crowds are streaming from the old Cathedral, where fervent prayers have been uttered, where sweet communings have been held down in each Christian heart; communings, prompted by faith and love in His presence. Let us enter, the last rays of the sitting sun, are bathing just now in a flood of golden light, the humble repository, where lies enshrined the Adorable Victim of mankind. Gaze upon that aged form, in prostrate adoration before the "Three in One," and beneath the sable veil, recognize the placid saintly features of Sister Bourgeoys. This is her place of rest, after the toils and hardships of the week, here, before the Altar. The last lingering rays of the sun have faded in the west; night has drawn her curtains around cities and their sleeping multitudes; the bell has tolled out midnight hour; the sentinels "All's well" has died in the misty air, and still she kneels, her heart burning with a flame more ardent, aye a thousand times, than the sparkling light, that consumes the tapers around that shrine; and when the morning sun comes back, to gild tower and steeple and sacred fane, its first bright rays will fall again upon that brow, silvered,



by the frosts of seventy years, but now refreshed, by these twelve hours of loving fervent prayer. It was thus, she prepared herself for the responsibilities and cares of the coming day. The asylum, for the distressed and the abandoned was brought to a happy issue, and by this means, the Congregation was the instrument chosen by God, to lay the way for the present General Hospital of Quebec, where so many forlorn creatures were to find, temporal relief and the still greater benefit of spiritual assistance. This establishment was confided at a later period to cloistered nuns, who are more especially formed for the charge of an Hospital.

Quebec, however, was not to be deprived, on this account of the services, which the Congregation so ably rendered. Bishop de Saint-Vallier, gave the Sisters a house in the Upper Town, with full liberty to exchange this residence, for another more suitable to their occupations, should necessity compel them to do so. Some time after, they profited of their permission, and another house, more advantageously located, was procured; but hardly had the Sisters taken possession of their new dwelling, when a person opposed to its being sold, molested them in such a way, that they were obliged to abandon the place, and the only refuge they could find, was an old delapidated stable, near by. Apprized of this event, Sister Bourgeoys wrote to them as follows :

"I rejoice to learn, that you are now residing in a stable ;  
"but at the same time, I am grieved to hear of the misunderstanding about your last residence. It is my desire, that we  
"live in peace with all, because God has commanded us to  
"love our neighbor." The Sisters must have endured a great deal, since their venerable Mother could speak as follows :  
"Our Sisters were obliged to leave this house, on account of  
"many little difficulties, which it was impossible to overcome.  
"They had a great deal to suffer there, and when they left it,  
"they left misery." Cares seemed to increase with years,  
"and several disagreeable circumstances, concerning dwellings,  
"were more than a reason for the heroic foundress, to return to  
"Quebec. It was the 8th of May 1690.

"I spoke to Mr. Glandelet," she writes, "and also to Mr. Hazeur, merchant in the city of Quebec, to see if they could not procure us, a house in the Lower Town. They assisted me very kindly and I had my choice between two. We sold the house, which had been given to us, by Bishop Saint-Vallier, for the sum of 2,510 livres, and paid 7,500 for the other. My intention was to procure, not only a suitable residence for our Sisters, but at the same time, to have comfortable lodgings for our Sister-missionaries, when business called them to the city. I am convinced that Divine Providence and our heavenly Mother, assisted us wonderfully. Mr. Hazeur, not only promises to wait for the payment, but at the same time earnestly requests us to share with him, the merits of our good works." Hearing that this second purchase dissatisfied several persons, Sister Bourgeoys yielded a second time, saying agreeably: "that she not only wished to love her neighbor, but at the same time to be loved in return." Speaking of this to her Sisters, she says: "No doubt, there was a little injustice in the matter, but as I heard one of the party saying, that he could never pardon us the pretended wrong, I could not bear the thought of being, even the innocent cause of his resentment."

Unfortunately, the proprietor of the house, was wanting in consideration on this occasion; he insisted upon immediate payment, which could not be realized at this moment, owing to unforeseen circumstances. "There was no means of reasoning with this man," writes the Sister, "I had recourse to several persons, and tried to borrow the sum; but I could only obtain the loan of 300 <sup>francs</sup> ~~livres~~ for a month, and this sum was useless. In my trouble I was inspired to implore divine assistance, I entered the church of the Jesuit Fathers, which was near by, and throwing myself at the feet of Our Heavenly Mother, in her chapel and before her altar, I said: 'My dear Blessed Mother, I can do nothing more! do help me.' I prayed a little, then left the church. At the door, I met a person, whom I supposed entirely ignorant of our affair, who asked me, how we were going to manage. 'If you wish,' he

*hounds*

" added, 'I can easily lend you 1,000 livres, for which I ask  
" no interest, and if I succeed in business, it is yours. Take  
" it, but do not mention the matter to any one.' I did not  
" return to the Convent." Sister Bourgeoys adds: "but sent  
" at once for our Sisters to come and meet me at this person's  
" house. There, I consented to all he required, and received  
" the 1,000 ~~livres~~ *hounds* in gold coin. We left the house, and a few  
" steps farther, met our proprietor and his wife, who were as  
" mild as lambs. I offered to pay them at once, so we entered  
" a notary's office, acquitted our debt, and all were satisfied.  
" Thanks to our Blessed Mother's interference, this affair was  
" happily terminated."

It is not surprising that a heart so thoroughly imbued with  
the purest principles of Christian charity, should receive from  
above, the most signal favors. Few perhaps have learned to  
imitate more perfectly Him, who has said, "Learn of me, for  
I am meek and humble of heart."

## CHAPTER FOURTEENTH.

Sister Bourgeoys' spirit of mortification.—Imitation of the Blessed Virgin, in her outward appearance.—Special favors received from Heaven.—The pious foundress erects a church contiguous to her Congregation.—Miss LeBer's generosity.—Hôtel-Dieu destroyed by fire.—Miss LeBer consummates her heroic sacrifice.—Sister Bourgeoys' impressions, at the sight of three different vocations of holy women, now dwelling within her Congregation.

The admirable example of Sister Bourgeoys' life, was no doubt, the most powerful stimulant, that could be offered for the sanctification of souls. The following relation taken from our household annals, placed there, by those who were eye witnesses of her daily actions, will give us an insight of the heroic perfection of her domestic life.

She could not view herself in any other light, than that of a victim, charged with the expiation of sin, and this thought being upper most in her mind, inspired her, with an ardent love for sufferings of every kind. Zeal for the salvation of souls, led her to reduce her body to servitude, and she might well exclaim with the great Apostle of nations. "In all things we suffer tribulations, but are not distressed: we are straitened but are not destitute: we suffer persecution, but are not forsaken: we are cast down, but we perish not. Always bearing about in our body, the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus, may be made manifest in our bodies."

With regard to her food, it was always of the poorest and the simplest kind, and if at times she was obliged to make use of aliments; proper to flatter sensuality in the slightest manner, her spirit of mortification, ever ingenious soon found a remedy, by taking it either too warm or too cold, mixing it with water, ashes, or some other ingredient to render it insipid. She ate but little, and on fridays took but one meal; she drank nothing but water, and that only once a day, but never in sufficient quantity to allay her thirst, not even during the

excessive heat of summer. Her meals were always taken in some painful posture, and no inducement could make her give a little relief, to her poor careworn frame.

From a long habit of mortification, the sense of taste was so completely destroyed, that the most ~~unsavoury~~ and disagreeable dishes were relished, as if they had been the most delicious. Her short hours of sleep were spent on rough boards, or on the bare ground, with a log of wood for a pillow; she would have considered a common straw tick, an unpardonable sensuality. She never approached the fire in winter, and no matter how inclement or severe the weather, its inconveniences were accepted, as obligatory, and the most trifling relief deniable. Her body was either torn by rude disciplines, or loaded with instruments of penance, and we shrink from the remembrance of a little cap, which she wore secretly, night and day, and which was lined with sharp points, that penetrated deep into her head. On one occasion a sister having remarked by chance, this ingenious invention of her love of suffering, begged of her to lay it aside; she answered laughingly, that her head was quite at ease, as much so, as if she reclined upon a pillow of down.

Another time, the Sisters fearing that her health would suffer, in consequence of these excessive austerities, begged of her to cease at least, for a time, so as to be spared to her community. Her only answer, was a short and moving instruction, upon the obligation incumbent on every Christian, to lead a penitential and mortified life. Struck with admiration they withdrew, animated with a holy and ~~ardent~~ desire to imitate her example. To these austerities, Sister Bourgeoys added ardent prayers, for the perseverance of the just, and for the conversion of sinners. Mr. Souart, of Saint Sulpice, who had been her spiritual director for the space of twelve years, held her virtue in such veneration, that he was firmly persuaded, no harm or evil could befall, the colony, so long as her supplicating hands were raised in its behalf; and for this reason, he loved to call her the little Saint Genevieve of Canada. The short hours, allotted to rest, were interrupted by two long hours

of meditation, and the severe cold of winter, never prevented the performance of this pious practice. Mr. de Belmont, in speaking to the Sisters, of their pious foundress after her death, says : " Her days and nights were a continued prayer, " and when came the precious moments of holy communion, " she approached the Altar, her eyes bathed in tears, her " mouth perfumed with loving aspirations, and it would seem " that her whole soul came forth to meet her Beloved ; of this " we have been eye witnesses. But her interior dispositions, " her words of burning love, are above the language of man. " These are mysteries known to God alone."

The austere life led by Sister Bourgeoys, did not in any way, render her manners morose or repulsive. On the contrary, her familiarity was so reserved and still so winning, that she ~~invariably~~ drew towards her the hearts of all. It could be said of her, that in imitation of her heavenly Mother : " Her " exterior was resplendent with that modesty and recollection, " which came from the Divine Presence, in which she walked. " Her mouth was prudent in all its words, her eyes chaste, ~~her~~ " ~~demeanour~~ <sup>alone</sup> ~~modest~~, her walk grave and dignified. Her " familiarity so agreeable, that she gained all hearts to God, " by her exterior so replete with charms and heavenly attractions." Sister Morin, of the Hôtel-Dieu, in speaking of Sister Bourgeoys' merit, and of the immense service which she rendered to the Church of Canada, adds : " Sister Bourgeoys, " animated with the purest love for God, and zeal for His " glory, performed all these wonderful things. She lives to-day " in odor of sanctity, but so humble and so lowly, that her " sight alone inspires humility." " I do not think I ever met " with a more virtuous person," writes Father Bouvard, Superior of the Jesuits in Quebec, " words are inadequate to " portray her soul's greatness, her faith, her confidence in God, " her spirit of devotion, of zeal, of humility and true mortification." Ah ! who may speak of virtue's omnipotence, of its unfailing beneficence ? It will dictate words whose power is irresistible, because their sweetness is divine.

So far, the worthy Sister, had given perfect examples of

heroic virtue, which is the special mark of those chosen souls, who are destined by God, to accomplish extraordinary actions. The fruits of benediction which attended Sister Bourgeoys' exertions, the happy results of her zeal for the sanctification of souls, prove clearly, that her Congregation, was the work of God alone, and many times it would seem, as if Providence wished to give special marks of predilection, so as to recompense her filial love and confidence. We read : "That during a year of great scarcity, the Sister in charge of the baking department discovered one day, that the quantity of flour was so much reduced, that it was useless to take it, to make the weekly allowance of bread. Sister Bourgeoys, to whom she made known her apprehensions, reproached her for her want of trust in Providence, and bade her return to her office, assuring her, that God would provide all that was necessary." Her submission received its recompense ; to her great astonishment, the flour multiplied so abundantly, that with this small quantity, she made as much bread as she was accustomed to make, with five bushels of flour. Another time the bread, failed. The only hope of the community was in the arrival of vessels, loaded with provisions for Ville-Marie, and there was no appearance of them reaching the city that day, the wind being contrary. The hour for evening refecton drew nigh. Sister Bourgeoys, aware of the poor Sister's trouble, sent her word to pray that the weather might change. She did so, her prayer was heard, and the desired assistance came. Another incontestable prodigy : when the provision of wheat was withdrawn from the store room, it was discovered to be, in greater quantity, than when placed therein. The Sisters knew that their loved Mother prayed there, from time to time, and attributed this increase to the fervor of her prayers. Convinced of this, they were tempted to measure the quantity remaining, so as to determine precisely, in what this marvellous augmentation consisted ; Sister Bourgeoys perceiving this, put an end to their design, by telling them, that such an action on their part, was more than enough, to cause these favors to be withdrawn. One year, the Sister who had charge of purchasing the provision for



the house, could only buy sufficient flour for a month, on account of the high price ; and notwithstanding, this quantity nourished the entire community, for four long months. And again, we read in the records of the time : " That when the provision of wine had failed everywhere, the remainder of a barrel at the Congregation, furnished wine, not only for the use of the community, but also supplied the Hospital for the space of three months ; and that at the end of this time, when the vessels came from France, with the ordinary supplies, the bottom of the vessel dried up at once." A person in every way reliable, speaks of having witnessed a similar prodigy, while he resided with the Sisters ; he tells us : " That when the wine had failed everywhere, the Congregation, with a limited supply, furnished all the wine for masses, and for the wants of the sick in the city." This same person, tells us : " That upon one other occasion, though there was not a morsel of bread in the house, Sister Bourgeoys, in a spirit of fidelity to the rule, ordered the bell to be rung as usual, for the particular examination, exercise which immediately precedes the repast. While they were thus occupied, some one sent a sufficient quantity of everything necessary for dinner."

All these marks of divine intervention, tell us forcibly that God will never be outdone in generosity ; and if an eternal recompense is promised, to even a cup of cold water given in His name ; if He has said : " Give, and it shall be given into you," what marvel that Heaven should lend a willing ear to Sister Bourgeoys' supplications ? That His eternal Providence should watch over her, and in return for the hopeful confiding prayer, provide for each day and for the wants thereof ?

" They who stand in true humility, who live in simple obedience, walk in charity and patience, advance daily in spirit, and obtain great favor with God," says the author of the Imitation.

We have not considered the different circumstances of Sister Bourgeoys' life so far, dear reader, without having admired her perfect correspondence to the call of grace, and that spirit of faith, that marked her most trivial acts, and won for her, the

necessary courage to imitate more and more perfectly, the heavenly models she had chosen. Her submission to the will of God, was as apparent in her mortified penitential life, as when she received His consolations and His favors. She murmured not, when crosses fell heavily and successively to her lot ; when manifold contradictions and humiliations accompanied her most glorious undertakings ; when cruel accidents laid low, the works achieved by her preserving industry ; when the toils and privations of more than twenty years, seemed almost useless, buried there under the smoking ruins of her Congregation. She murmured not, because she looked upon these events, with an eye of faith ; she saw them pre-ordained by a higher power, and directed by an Almighty hand, for her greater good.

The remarkable energy with which she was endowed, went hand in hand, with that child-like confidence, that obtains all, from an indulgent heavenly Father. We have seen her rebuild her convent in that spirit of loving submission and dependence upon Providence, which insured success. We shall now see how Heaven blessed her, and how, to satisfy the craving desires of her heart, He came to prove His love, by taking up his abode under her own roof. Hardly were the Sisters located in their new convent, when the pious foundress, ever zealous to procure God's glory, conceived the design of erecting a church contiguous to her Congregation, so as to procure to the entire sisterhood, the inestimable advantage of dwelling near our Divine Lord. Pressed with a vehement desire to attain this end, all the energies of her soul, were brought forth, she exclaimed in the words of the royal Prophet, "I will not give slumber to mine eyelids, nor rest to the temples of my head, "until I find a Tabernacle for the Lord my God." Mr. Dollier de Casson approved of her design, for he had not the slightest doubt, but that the inspiration came from Heaven, and that Providence would, in consequence, give her the means for its execution. The Sisters' noble project was soon known throughout the city, and finally came to the ears of Miss LeBer, one of Canada's gifted daughters. This young person, the heiress of immense wealth, was no sooner apprized of Sister

Bourgeoys' intention, than she offered the greater part of the sum necessary for its construction, while her brother, Mr. Peter LeBer, contributed generously to the good work, by giving all the cut stone for the frontispice. The thought that Sister Bourgeoys was about to erect a church, was to Miss LeBer, a source of unutterable consolation, because she hoped that she might, one day, have the happiness of taking up her abode there, and thus enjoy the only earthly consolation, her soul desired. Many motives induced her to choose this spot ; the love and veneration she felt for Sister Bourgeoys ; the strong impressions of grace, produced by the examples of those who dwelt within the Congregation ; the privilege of living and dying in an institution, so specially dear to the Mother of God, all these reasons seemed to bring the realization of her fondest hopes. The Sisters were penetrated with the liveliest gratitude for this providential interference, and more desirous than ever, to possess our Lord in their midst, they endeavored by prayer and by sacrifice, to hasten the happy moment. Heaven soon answered their prayers, the foundations of the church were laid, all hands set to work, and the close of the year 1694, saw the little church of Notre-Dame completed. Sister Bourgeoys' joy was extreme on this occasion, and during one of her grateful transports, her heart gave utterance to the following prayer : " O Lord and amiable Saviour, when we recall Thy love and " tenderness towards our little community, which is so truly " Thine, we are encouraged to offer anew our supplications, " and to have recourse to the bounty of our kind Heavenly " Father. In the sentiments of filial devotion, we prostrate " ourselves before the throne of Thy Omnipotence, and beseech " Thee, by our firm belief, that Thou art really present in the " adorable Sacrament of the Altar, and by the sufferings of Thy " most Holy Passion, to take pity on us, Thy servants of the " Congregation, who have no other ambition than that of loving, " and of serving Thee faithfully. Permit not that our good " will should ever be weakened, but rather, that it may receive " an increase of strength, each successive day. Thou knowest " our wants, we hope for all through Thy infinite mercy. We

"thank Thee for the favors already obtained, but more especially, for to-day's proof of Thy love and tender indulgence. May we render ourselves worthy to our continuance. We dare promise, that these unceasing benefits will be more deeply appreciated by all those, who are here assembled, and who had no other motive than that of loving and serving Thee, to their latest breath, when they entered this community. Deign to be the Protector, the Guardian of this house ; be its strength, its support, and do not permit that our enemy should ever prevail against us. Preserve the blessings of peace in our midst, and unite us all by the bonds of perfect charity. O Blessed Virgin, forget us not, be also our advocate, and the supplement of our devotion towards thy Divine Son, obtain for us the virtues of which we stand in need, and deign, O Our Mother, to place our petitions at the feet of thy Son, our Saviour."

The following detail will now acquaint us with the manner in which our Lord, took up His abode in this new sanctuary. During the night of February the 25th, 1695, fire was discovered in the steeple of the Hôtel-Dieu. A sentinel on duty, in front of the Governor's house, gave the alarm, about three o'clock in the morning. Unable to arouse the neighbors by his cries and shouts, he ran to the Hôtel-Dieu and warned the nuns of their danger. The infirmarians and several of the convalescent ran out, and gave the alarm in their turn ; while the Sisters, hastened to the church to ring the bell, they were justly astonished, when the bell rope fell at their feet, all on fire. The cries of fire ! fire ! so alarmed the sick, that fearing to be consumed in their beds, they threw themselves by the windows, out into the snow. None remained behind, not even one, who was in the agonies of death. This poor man, dragged himself into the yard, and expired some moments afterwards upon a bed of snow. The whole city was astir ; some stood looking on in anxious sympathy, while others ran to the rescue. Father William, a Recollet Friar, saved upon his own shoulders, their provisions of flour and meal. Father Joseph Denis, the Superior of these Friars, penetrated bravely, into the midst of the

flames, and withdrew the Blessed Sacrament, which he carried out, and placed for a moment upon a little bed of snow ; Jesus in the Sacred Host, was not forsaken here. A solitary worshipper followed him there, and we cannot imagine a more beautiful, or a more pathetic scene, than the Tabernacle of snow, and the shivering form of the aged nun, who knelt there, in prostrate adoration for several hours. We must not omit, this beautiful trait of devotion towards the Blessed Sacrament. Mother LeJumeau de Lanaudière, at the time of this catastrophe, was in her seventy-fifth year, and had always been distinguished, for her singular devotion to Jesus in the Sacred Host. When Father Joseph left the church, Mother LeJumeau followed him ; she was but partially clothed, and remained kneeling upon the snow for several hours, fearing neither the extreme cold, nor the burning timbers that fell around her, on all sides. When the Blessed Sacrament was transported, to a more becoming station, she still followed and remained in adoration, until the next morning. One thought only, seemed to absorb her, at this moment ; it was to beseech our Lord to preserve his work, and not permit, that the little community of Saint-Joseph should perish. The next morning, as the golden rays of the rising sun were dancing, as if in mockery, upon the smoking ruins of the Hôtel-Dieu, the Sisters, to the number of thirty, wended their way to the Congregation, where they were kindly cared for, and treated with every mark of respect, friendship and charity. A moment of anguish, one of their number was missing. Unaware, that Mother LeJumeau had accompanied the Blessed Sacrament, ever since the first cry of alarm, they feared that she had perished in the flames. They were not kept long in suspense. Father Denis presently appeared with Our Lord, whom he had withdrawn, from His secular dwelling place, and brought Him now to the little Oratory, which had been prepared at the Congregation. Mother LeJumeau, finished her stations of love, and found a home and a consolation, at the foot of His Altar. Sister Morin, of the Hôtel-Dieu, remarks : " You can easily imagine the joy, of the Sisters of the Congregation upon the arrival of this Divine Host ; but their happi-

"ness cost us dearly." The two communities, dwelt thus together, for the space of nine months. This same year 1695, Miss Jane LeBer, consummated her heroic sacrifice, and entered the Congregation of Notre Dame as a Recluse ; fifteen years had already elapsed, since she embraced a life of reclusion in her father's house. A few words, dear reader, ere we proceed. Among the young ladies of Canada, Miss LeBer, was undoubtedly the one, in whom were centered all those exterior advantages, so highly prized by the world : beauty, wit, penetration, a generous disposition, a loving heart, besides being the richest heiress in New France.

She was one of those chosen souls, given betimes, to nations and to people, as marks of God's predilection ; heroic models, who come to us as tell-tales of bygone virtues. Having completed her education at an early age, Miss LeBer returned home, where every attraction, that the world could offer, was spread before her ; but she was never to stoop so low, as the vain pleasures of life ; she was never to kneel, before the shrine of wordly pomp, nor the pure affections of her young heart, to be tainted by those of earth. At this time Margaret Bourgeoys' Congregation, was a household word, throughout the fair city of Ville-Marie, and as the echo fell softly upon Miss LeBer's ear, her inmost soul yearned to practice, those sublime virtues, she so much admired in the pious foundress. That irresistible something, which ever accompanies holiness, the calm, the holy quiet that pervaded the Convent precincts, drew her forcibly from the world. At the age of seventeen, she made a vow of virginity, for the space of five years, and bursting asunder every tie, that bound her to the legitimate joys of home, with her father's consent, she commenced that life of heroic seclusion, which was to shed so much lustre, on the church of Canada. She made choice of an apartment in the most retired part of the house, and there, she gave herself up to the most austere practices of penance ; she adopted an under garment of haircloth, with a belt of the same material, and macerated her body in the most cruel manner. She observed strict silence, and devoted her time to prayer, read-

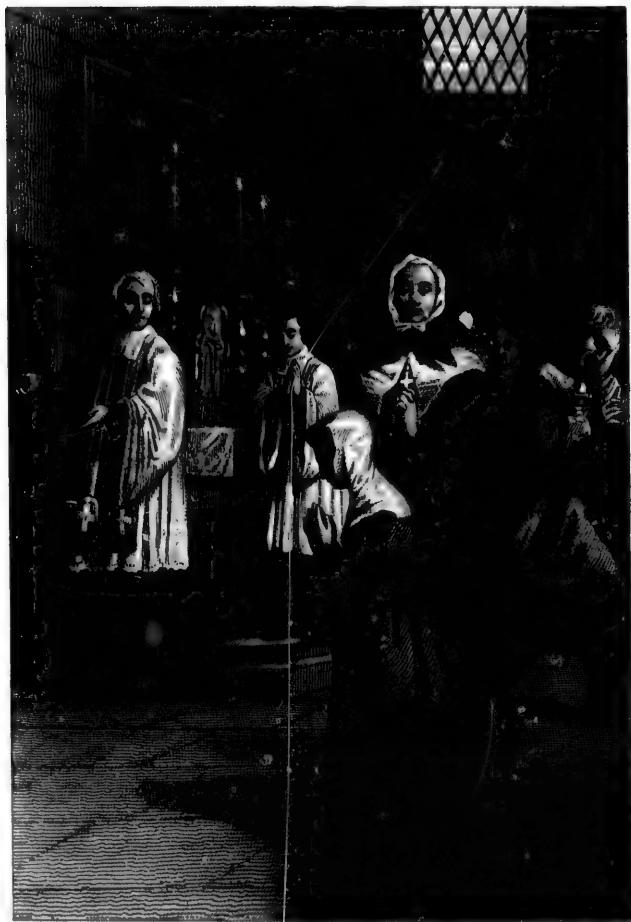


ing and needle work, and so completely did she master her natural feelings, that no circumstance, neither painful nor joyous, could cause her to swerve; even for a moment, from the resolution, she had taken. Two years only after her seclusion, her mother died; without losing for a moment her peace of mind, she left her cell and entered her mother's apartment; approaching the bed of death, she bent her knees in prayer, pressed her mother's hand to her lips, then withdrew, without uttering a single word. Some time later, one of her brothers was mortally wounded in battle, and died a few days after his removal home. Sister Bourgeoys, hearing this sad news, hastened to the house of mourning, to express her sympathy and offer her services, if required. Miss LeBer, appeared for an instant before the two Sisters, gave them all that was necessary for laying out the body, and without uttering a single word, left them and returned to her cell. The Sisters astonished at her constancy, thanked God for the spirit of fortitude, with which He had so perfectly endowed his youthful servant. In contributing towards the direction of the church of the Congregation, Miss LeBer wished, not only to realize Sister Bourgeoys' desire, but at the same time satisfy the yearnings of her own loving heart, and shut herself out entirely from all wordly scenes. Her intention, was to reserve for herself a small apartment behind the Altar, where she could pour forth, day and night, her aspirations to Him, for whose love all else had been forsaken. We find in the records of that time, the following description of Miss LeBer's final separation from the world.

"On the eve of this great day, she presented her donation to the Sisters of the Congregation, for their church, and assured them, an annual payment of 500 livres for her pension and that of one of her relatives, who was to render her the most indispensable services. The ceremony took place on Friday evening, the 5th of August, 1695. The Bishop of Quebec, then absent in France, was replaced by Mr. Dollier de Casson, V. G., who accompanied by all the clergy, proceeded to Mr. LeBer's house, singing psalms and reciting prayers, suitable to the occasion. Miss LeBer, leaving forever the



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*Imp. Doin 52, r. Montpensier Paris.*

*La sœur Le Ber, pour honorer Jésus-Christ résidant au très saint Sacrement de l'autel, se consacre à lui comme adoratrice, et lui voue une perpétuelle réclusion.*

*Sister Le Ber consecrates herself to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and vows perpetual seclusion.*

“ home of her childhood, walked after the clergy, followed by  
“ her venerable father, and a large number of friends and  
“ relatives. The whole city was in movement, and thousands,  
“ attracted by the novelty of the scene, thronged the streets  
“ and byways. Few could refrain from shedding tears, on  
“ beholding this innocent Virgin, about to enter an abode,  
“ which might in truth, be considered as her tomb. Her social  
“ position, seemed to heighten the interest, while all were  
“ struck with her unassuming modesty. She wore a woollen  
“ dress of a greyish shade, a black belt, with a head-  
“ dress similar to that, then worn by the Sisters of the Con-  
“ gregation. She could have chosen a brilliant position among  
“ the great ones of earth, but all this, she had spurned, to  
“ obtain a more desirable treasure. The innocence and sweet-  
“ ness of her countenance, contrasted sadly, with the grieved,  
“ almost dejected look of her virtuous father, and contributed  
“ to awaken deep emotions in the hearts of all present. The  
“ procession moved on ; upon reaching the Congregation,  
“ Mr. LeBer overcome by his painful feelings, was obliged to  
“ withdraw before the ceremony commenced.

“ Mr. Dollier de Casson blessed the apartment, destined  
“ for the recluse, and addressed a few words to Sister LeBer,  
“ as she knelt humbly before him, surrounded by the clergy,  
“ the Sisters of the Congregation and the faithful, who had  
“ assembled to witness this ceremony. After this, while the  
“ litany of the Blessed Virgin was being sung, Mr. Dollier de  
“ Casson, led her to her cell. She entered and closed the door  
“ herself.” Sister Bourgeoys writes in reference to the event,  
as follows : “ I experienced inexpressible consolation when  
“ Miss LeBer entered our house, to live as a recluse. She will  
“ never leave this abode, and has no communication whatever,  
with the outer world.” Mr. Dollier de Casson says : “ I blessed  
“ the Chapél of the Congregation, on the 6th of August, High  
“ mass was celebrated with all possible solemnity. The church  
“ was crowded; and Mr. Leber was present. The day before,  
“ he had sacrificed his dear and only daughter, who entered  
“ the Congregation as a recluse. His grief being too intense

"to assist at the ceremony, he came back the following morning and assisted at mass, proving thereby, that notwithstanding his deep affliction, he immolated willingly his well beloved child, in obedience to the call of God. Two victims have been thus sacrificed in this pious sanctuary; here, dwells the daughter, and with her are buried the affections of her father, who is left almost alone, at the age of sixty-four years."

Immediately after high mass, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed, for the first time during forty hours, in the Chapel of the Congregation. Sister Bourgeoys had long solicited this favor, now her desires were realized. Personal esteem for Miss LeBer, and for her eminent qualities, were not the only cause of Sister Bourgeoys' satisfaction. Our heroine's mode of living, elicited the heartfelt gratitude of the venerable foundress, towards the Author of all good. A pious thought had once been expressed to Sister Bourgeoys, by her Director, M. Jendret, previous to her coming to Canada, "Our Lord," he remarked, "after His Ascension into Heaven, left three classes of women, to follow and to work for His Church; some called to the exercises of a contemplative life, are represented by Saint Magdalen; others, whose special calling leads them to the cloister, where they devote themselves to the welfare of their neighbor, have Saint Martha for their model; while others again, are called, to honor and imitate the Blessed Virgin's active life, she who contributed so largely, to the sanctification of souls, and that outside of the cloister. Such, he said, was to be the special aim of Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation of Notre-Dame," and indeed her institution was the first, devoted to this peculiar imitation of the Blessed Virgin. The pious foundress, considering this reunion of persons consecrated to God, at this time in her house, could not but recall to mind the reflections formerly made by her Director. She speaks thus, "Since Miss LeBer entered our institution, I have beheld the three classes of women left to minister to the Church. These three primitive orders, are now united beneath our roof. Miss LeBer represents Saint Magdalen in her solitude, the

" Sisters of Saint Joseph remind me of Martha's busy though  
" cloistered life ; the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame,  
" are to reproduce the Blessed Virgin's active life ; she is their  
" Mother, foundress and Superior, and She alone embraces all  
" these different callings. Our Blessed Lady, is pleased then, to  
" unite these three classes of women within her house, to teach  
" us, that a bond of universal charity, should unite us to those,  
" who are devoted to God's service under her protection."  
These different circumstances, so honorable to religion, so  
replete with sentiments of christian heroism, were to Sister  
Bourgeoys, a deep compensation, for her past trials, and three  
years later, recalling these precious favors, she pours forth, her  
grateful effusions, in the following terms :

" Three years have transpired, since Our Sovereign Lord and  
" Master, deigned to take up His abode, in our midst, He dwells  
" continually under our roof, where the Holy Sacrifice is daily  
" offered ; where confessions, communions, and other allowable  
" devotions are performed. No words can render my gratitude  
" for all these benefits.

" Unable of ourselves, to make the slightest retribution, we  
" beg that Our heavenly Mother, will acquit our many obliga-  
" tions, so that in unison with the nine choirs of angels, and  
" strengthened, by grace from on high, we may be enabled to  
" fill the duties of our vocation, in the sanctification of youth."

## CHAPTER FIFTEENTH.

The Congregation of Notre Dame in 1690. — Moral suffering. — Sister Bourgeoys' way of the Cross. — Strange illusion of a disordered mind. — Sister Bourgeoys' interior trials. — Bishop de Saint Vallier. — The pious foundress, finally obtains permission, to lay aside the burden of the superiority. — Sister Marie Barbier second Superior of the Congregation of Notre-Dame. — Sister Bourgeoys' joy on this occasion.

The annals of 1690, show us the magnificent result of Sister Bourgeoys' labors. In the heart of the rising City of Ville-Marie stood her Mother-House, wherein, dwelt a numerous and fervent Sisterhood, ready when called upon, to accept the toils and privations of the missionary life, and proclaim throughout the length and breath of Canada, the blessings of virtue, and to point out to erring straying feet, the path that leads to eternal life.

It would seem, as Sister Bourgeoys looked around her and viewed the happy effects of that consoling promise, given years before : "Go, and I will never abandon you," that the assurance had been fulfilled. It would seem, that after her steadfast love, mid sacrifices and privations of every kind, during near half a century, that now, when the day was well nigh done, she could rest her weary frame, spend her last few hours in peace, before the Altar, and reap even here below, the fruit of all her past labors. But no, it could not be. She was to taste once more the bitter Chalice. Aye ! drain it to the very dregs, and lay down her cross, only when came the hour, to take up her crown : her crown, enriched by the merits of domestic trials, patiently and lovingly borne. "Thy will be done !" she cried. T'was done.

"When through life's tempestuous sea.

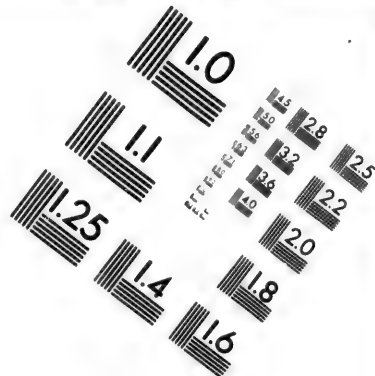
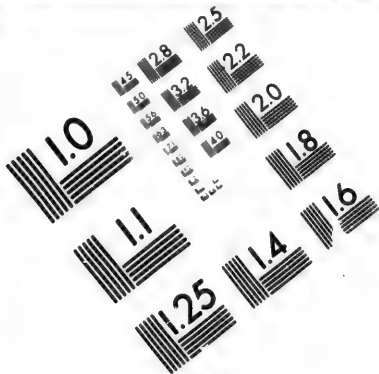
"Her chastened spirit fled home. O God ! to Thee."

Those of our fellow creatures, whom we encounter in our daily walks through life, bearing bravely, the crosses and pri-

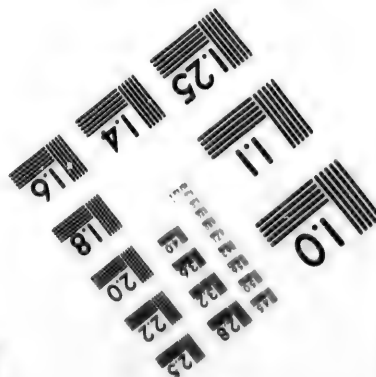
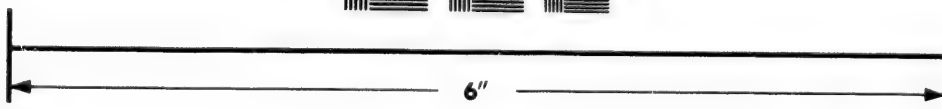
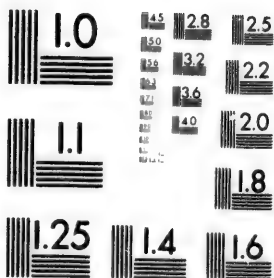
vations, the wrong and ills which chequer our existence, and which are the inevitable lot of man ; these, have most certainly strong claims, to our admiration, albeit, that to suffer and to die, is a common destiny. The christian penetrated with the real import of these words, can alone say, I suffer ; not that I may die, but that I may live, for he knows that eternal life is the price of temporal suffering. Consequently, the sanctification of our daily trials, is incumbent on all those who would be saved. Crosses, come to us in every form and hue ; from those we love, and from those whom we should, but do not love. Happy, those who receive these apparent ills, with submission ; happier far, those who press them to their heart with joy. " Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted : " " Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice sake, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven."

Consoling assurances, for even temporal suffering. But there is another world, an extended realm of inward suffering, whose agonies and griefs, no tongue may tell ; where the hearts' capacities, are as it were enlarged, to take in a more copious draught of mental anguish ; hours of interior trial, as far removed from outward griefs and ills, as the heavens are from earth. God, whose judgments are inscrutable, and whose ways are incomprehensible, leads oftentimes chosen souls, into this garden of Gethsemani, that they may have a share in the agonies and the Passion of His Divine Son, and learn by their own cruel sufferings, what those of Jesus, must have been, and how intense the love that bore them. Oftentimes too, these interior trials, have been messengers to the entire world, proclaiming the wonderful ways of God, within the christian soul, bringing to light, traits of the rarest heroism, virtues of dazzling splendor. Interior trials, seem to be the glorious manifestation of hidden sanctity. How many saints, now honored on our Altars, would never have been invoked as such, had they not passed by this crucible. " I am the Good Shepherd," hath he said. " I know mine, and mine know me : My Sheep hear my voice, and follow me." Aye, even though he leads them, up the thorny path of Cavalry, where the foot prints of a God





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man crucified, attest, that they who would be saved, must take up their cross, and follow their Divine Master. It is a glorious thing, to know how to suffer ! The stoic, may speak of his impassiveness, the warrior and the hero, may tell of their undaunted bravery and scornful smile, when in the face of danger and of death. But what are these ? Alas ! faint shadows of that real greatness, that true courage and Christian magnanimity, which come from the well-springs of Catholicity ; heroisms which crimsoned the earth, where stood the martyr, and won for him, the eternal recompense. Sister Bourgeoys, so truly and so dearly loved, by her heavenly Spouse, was not to enter everlasting glory, by another route, than that, trod by the Saints of God ; and yet, she had borne the cross, patiently and well, she had pressed the bitter chalice, with submission to her lips, still, she must taste again the bitter potion. The three primitive communities of Ville-Marie, were consecrated, as we have already remarked, to the " Holy Family." The Seminary of Saint Sulpice, imitating by word and deed the Holy Infant Jesus ; the Sisters of the Congregation taking the Mother of Our Divine Saviour for their model ; the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu specially devoted to the glorious Patron of the universal Church. Man's common enemy, jealous of the good achieved, by these fervent communities, came with his malignant inspirations, to trouble the holy calm, which had hitherto prevailed in their respective precincts ; and in proposing the specious pretext of a more sublime perfection, he resolved to destroy the peculiar spirit and vocation of these institutions. His poisonous shafts, were singularly directed, towards one of the members of the Congregation, who on account of her ardent temperament, her exalted religious views and lively imagination, seemed to be a fitting instrument, for the accomplishment of his design. Instead of following in the path, traced by the Saints, and by the friends of God, this person guided solely by the false interpretation of her religious views, fancied that she was called by God, to lay the foundations of a new order, destined to honor the interior life, of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This community, according to her idea, was to be formed by

uniting the three others, and to strengthen still more her strange design, she pretended to discern the interior dispositions of those around her, and declared that souls came to her from the other world, to instruct her with regard to the good work. Every evil artifice that Satan could suggest, was put into execution, and several distinguished for their piety and learning, fell into the snare. Finally, one night, in November of 1689, this poor victim of her own extravagant illusions imagined, that one of the Sisters, who had died some months previously, appeared to her and commanded her, on the part of God, to warn the Superior of the Congregation, that she was on the point of being eternally lost. Sister Bourgeoys paid but little attention to the revelation ; but in January of the following year, 1690, this same declaration being renewed, and the pious foundress learning for the second time, that she was at enmity with her God, became seriously alarmed.

God willed this peculiar suffering, into which she was now plunged, so that she might become still purer in his sight, and be a living holocaust on the Altar of sacrifice. At this moment, every sensible mark of God's love and grace, was seemingly withdrawn ; and after all her sacrifices, and all her trials ; after her innumerable works of piety and zeal, she was to repeat in this, her seventieth year, these words of the Gospel : " I am but a worthless and unfaithful servant ! " It would be difficult for us, to describe the state of interior desolation into which she was now cast. Sister Bourgeoys could be easily persuaded, that she was not in God's grace, because having loved, having known Him more intimately, having dwelt so long, and so fervently upon His amiabilities and His divine perfections, having refreshed her weary soul so often at this fountain of living waters, her great humility led her to think, that in truth, she had never sufficiently appreciated these heavenly favors ; that she had not given sacrifice for sacrifice ; heart for heart, love for love,—and now, He had come to thrust her from Him, because of her ingratitude, and her pretended infidelities in His service. She was almost in despair, not even daring to approach the Sacraments, which she feared, above

all things, to profane ; feeling like a reprobate, in the presence of her Sisters, she was unable to speak to them, or even raise her eyes before them. This was her situation for more than four years : a heavy cross to lay upon the careworn frame of seventy years. Deeming herself incapable and unworthy of guiding her Sisters any longer, she begged and entreated, as she had often done before, that the burden of the Superiority, might be placed upon younger shoulders. Some months elapsed, and no alleviation to her pain ; uneasy, troubled and dejected, she knew not what to do ;—her conscience forbade her to abandon the work, which God had placed in her hands ; she feared His divine indignation, and in this state of perplexity and doubt, lost all confidence in her Directors, who seemed, neither to understand her feelings, nor her situation. During this interval, Bishop de Saint-Vallier came to Ville-Marie, and paid his usual visit to the Sisters of the Congregation. Sister Bourgeoys, more anxious and more expectant than ever, asked his blessing and her dismissal from further government. She told him all her griefs, gave him her reasons why another Superior should be elected ; listened to his words ; bowed her aged head in submission to his decided refusal ; then turned once more, in a spirit of abandon, to the stern avocations of Superiority, despite her weary heart and anxious fears.

Mr. Tronson, the worthy superior of Saint-Sulpice in Paris, wrote to her at this time, a letter fit to awaken consoling thoughts, and calm her worst apprehensions, concerning the institution, she had labored so zealously to strengthen and maintain. Among other things, he expressed a desire, that all those persons whose manner of acting and thinking, had been in any way, prejudicial to the cause of religion in Canada, should forthwith return to France. Then, speaking of these imaginary visions, he says : " above all things, be strongly convinced, that if God should ever have extraordinary views or designs, upon your community, He will make known His holy will, not by visions or by revelations, but rather by the ordinary manner, by the mouth of superiors, the practice of

" obedience, and without the assistance of souls from the other  
" world. The common rules, which the Church prescribes,  
" suffice in this matter. Devotions that are beyond the ordin-  
" ary routine of every day life, in a community, must be looked  
" upon as suspicious. These extraordinary inspirations, which  
" lead us to abandon the duties of our vocation, always finish  
" badly." And in another letter, written sometime afterwards,  
he adds : " no matter, how great and how important the good  
" achieved by their talents, or by their virtue ; when these per-  
" sons are guided solely by the wanderings of their imagina-  
" tion ; when they are too strongly attached, to their own  
" uncommon singular ways, they are unfit for a community.  
" Our Lord never wished that His holy Mother should be  
" honored, by these acts of singularity, but rather by the pract-  
" ice of those solid virtues, which are always found in the path  
" of obedience."

Sister Bourgeoys was, no doubt, greatly consoled by these assurances ; her good judgment, her great discernment, in distinguishing the operations of nature and of grace, could not but convince her, that his words were true, that God had indeed blessed her work, that Mary had cast her mantle of protection around it. This storm took place from the very beginning, so that its fatal results might be transmitted to future generations, to those who were to continue her work, and prove to them that the only sure means, for the inmates of the Congregation, to persevere in the primitive spirit of their institution, was to walk in simplicity and obedience, in the well beaten path, traced by their mothers in the faith. Should any swerve from this common route, they must be considered as entirely divested of that peculiar spirit, which designates the Congregation of Notre-Dame.

The year 1693, witnessed the happy termination of Sister Bourgeoys' desires. Bishop de Saint Vallier visited the community this same year ; the venerable foundress did not fail to renew her entreaties respecting another Superior. This time her prayer was heard : " When I spoke to the Bishop of Quebec, she writes, concerning the elections, he asked me why

"I wished him, to choose another Superior. I answered that  
"perhaps God would allow me to live a few years longer, and,  
"that the experience I had acquired during my long years of  
"government, might prove useful to another. His Lordship  
"approved of my reasons, but I must confess, that I had  
"scruples in acting thus, particularly when I reflected that I  
"gave up the government of the house, simply on account of  
"my interior troubles, and I had so often promised Our dear  
"Lord, that I would not do so." Having obtained the long  
desired permission, Sister Bourgeoys assembled her Sisters, in  
the month of September, 1693, and in a manner conformable  
to the spirit of her institution, she gave up all authority, and  
abandoned all her claims to superiority or government. Her  
deep spirit of humility, prompted the following words on this  
occasion: "There must be no further question of me in future,  
"only as of a miserable creature, who merits to be severely  
"chastised, for her unfaithfulness in accomplishing the duties,  
"which were so lovingly confided to her. I beg that all will  
"pardon my negligence and that not one will refuse to give  
"me the assistance of her prayers. Remedy the evils I have  
"caused, as quickly as possible, and remember, that she who  
"replaces me, must see that the rule is observed, in even the  
"slightest detail. If this is not done for the salvation of our  
"souls, what more do we, than persons, who lead a christian  
"life in the world? Meditate well, upon the peculiar spirit of  
"the house, which is a spirit of poverty, of obedience and  
"abandon of all things, into the hands of God."

Several days elapsed, after the accomplishment of this act,  
and during all this time, Sister Bourgeoys was a perfect model,  
of what a Superior of the Congregation should be, after her  
demission. When the elections were over, Sister Bourgeoys  
joyfully embraced the second Superior of the Congregation,  
who was no other than Sister Marie Barbier, her first conquest  
in Canada. All hearts were glad, because of Sister Bourgeoys'  
joy; soon after the peace and calm, which had been, for  
more than four years, banished from her heart, returned, with  
all their wonted blessings. "God is so good, she writes, my



"troubles disappear, and the desires of my heart are brought  
"to an happy issue. Still, I have done nothing to merit this  
"mercy, it is God's gratuitous gift. Help me to be grateful  
"for so precious a favor. I have nothing more to do, but to  
"study the Divine Will, and endeavor to accomplish it." This  
tranquillity was not lasting ; the cross, she must bear for her  
own sanctification, and for the greater good of her religious  
family. Though Sister Bourgeoys had succeeded in laying  
aside the superiority, with all its responsibilities ; she was given  
a place of honor, among the counsellors of the community.  
No one was more competent, to maintain the discipline of the  
Congregation, than she who laid its foundations, and yet, this  
was too much for the humble and pious foundress. To live  
as a simple particular in the house of God, was her only ambi-  
tion ; to gain souls to God, like the Sister missionaries, or to  
give herself up to the most humble occupations of the commu-  
nity, was the dearest wish of her heart. She offered herself  
unceasingly for these offices, but without success ; because of  
the respect and veneration, which all bore her, not only as  
foundress, and first Superior of the Congregation, but for that  
better worth of sanctity and virtue, which made of her, the  
faithful imitative of her dear heavenly Mother.

## CHAPTER SIXTEENTH.

A glance at Sister Bourgeoys' life.—Difficulties concerning her Congregation.—Sister Bourgeoys answers these difficulties.—Bishop de Saint Vallier and the Ursulines.—The rule of the Congregation.—Sister Bourgeoys' firmness in adhering to the primitive spirit of her institution.—Mr. Tronson and Sister Bourgeoys.—Bishop de Saint Vallier returns from France, visits Ville-Marie, and the Sisters of the Congregation.—The Rule at last.—Its solemn acceptance.

We have followed Sister Bourgeoys, throughout the most remarkable circumstances of her long eventful life ; from her birth up to her seventieth year. We have loitered too, often times around some pleasing scene, which had for us, its own peculiar charm, and which perchance, taught us its own peculiar lesson. We have now reached that epoch, which is destined to resume all the hidden treasures of her heroism and of her virtue. So far, she has been the child of predilection from her most tender years ; later the ardent aspirant to sublime perfection ; afterwards the heroine of Ville-Marie, the wise and incomparable foundress, the judicious and worthy Superior of that Congregation, destined the first, to honor the Mother of God at Ville-Marie.

We shall now penetrate into the beauties of her private life, and listen to the words of wisdom, that fall from her lips. Forty years had elapsed since her arrival in Canada, almost as many, since the foundation of her Community, twenty since Louis the XIV had given his royal sanction. It was evident, that God had inspired and blessed the good work ; no proofs, could be more convincing than the fruits of zeal and piety, it had unceasingly produced. But, notwithstanding all this, her institution became a source of apprehension to the Prelate of Quebec, and some other distinguished persons.

Up to this time, the religious life had been looked upon in quite another light. When young persons desired to consecrate themselves to God, it was understood that as religious, they

should dwell within the precincts of the cloister, and seldom or never appear, beyond its portals. Consequently, there was something novel in the mode of life, adopted by the Sisters of the Congregation; and this circumstance gave rise to difficulties, which caused Bishop de Saint Vallier, to withhold his sanction for several years. Sister Bourgeoys refers to these events in her memoirs, and we shall see, how wisely, and how prudently, she answered all these objections, pretexted, to defer the long desired approbation. "We are asked" she writes, "why we do not join, one of the religious institutions, already established and approved of by the Church, without attempting to walk in the inexperienced path, we are now treading. In answer to this I remark, that we wish to embrace the state of life, which the Blessed Virgin, who is our Mother, our foundress, and our Sovereign, herself sanctified. This country was given to her, to be her domain, conformably to the prayers of the first colonists. When Our Lord came upon earth, He made choice of men to teach His doctrine and spread His Gospel, who were ill-calculated to please the world, or the things of the world, because they belonged to that class of men, called illiterate and uncultivated. He himself has said: "I will choose the weak, to confound the strong." In a similar manner, did Our Blessed Lady choose the Sisters of the Congregation, that they might instruct the young girls of the land, teach them to be good christians, and later, christian Mothers. Assurance upon assurance has been given us, that Our heavenly Mother, wished to see united here, on the island of Montreal, whose length and breath, she claims as her own, a religious family, whose speciality would be to imitate the life, which she herself led, while upon earth. Still more, it was her wish, that a seminary should be formed under her special protection; that a church should be dedicated to her, that a city should bear the name of Ville-Marie. All this has been realized, and the Congregation is the first Community, to which Canada gave birth. The others were already formed, before coming here, and even the first Sister of the Congregation, did not come with the precise intention

“ of founding a religious house. If then, Our Blessed Lady, “ deigns to rank us, among her servants, should we not be “ willing, to sacrifice our strength, our lives even, to contribute “ in our way towards the salvation of souls, and thus continue “ her pious occupations? After Our Lord's resurrection, she “ contributed in a special manner, towards the establishment “ of the Church, in instructing the primitive christians, and “ in leading them to the knowledge and love of her Divine “ Son, never refusing a service which necessity demanded, or “ charity suggested. Were any led astray, she, by her pious “ exhortations, brought them back to the path of virtue.

“ To imitate this Holy Virgin, the Sisters of the Congrega- “ tion should do all in their power, to assist such persons in “ reforming their lives ; to win their hearts, by acts of loving “ zeal, and lead them to God, by word and example.

2nd. “ We are asked, why we do not choose some special “ protector for Our Congregation, it being a sure means of “ gaining souls, to God. I answer, if it is true, that God gives “ to the holy founders of religious orders, a great facility for “ gaining souls to Heaven, we know full well, that our heavenly “ protectress, has received this same power tenfold.

“ We cannot doubt of this, and each succeeding day “ strengthens this conviction. When the Colony was first “ settled, it was impossible to bring up children for the first “ eight years, and when we did succeed, it was a little girl, “ brought up in our own community. The first Iroquois child that “ received Baptism, lived and died with us. The first of this “ nation who consecrated herself to God, wore the habit of the “ Congregation, for the space of twelve years, that is, up to the “ time of her death. The first of Ville-Marie's daughters, who “ entered the religious life, became a Sister of the Congrega- “ tion of Notre Dame. The first school opened on the island “ of Montreal, was again the work of the Congregation. The “ first stone church built, was in honor of Our Lady of Good “ Help and was an offering from her children of the Congre- “ gation.

3rd. “ Why do we not adopt for our institution some rule

“ already in practice, and duly authorized by the Church ? I  
“ answer, that the rule of charity, is that which Our Lady pres-  
“ cribes to all those, who would walk in her footsteps. The  
“ primitive christians knew no other, for the love of God and  
“ of our neighbour, contain the entire law. If we wish then,  
“ to practice this most sublime of christian rules, all our  
“ thoughts, words and actions, should be, as it were, impregnated  
“ with this divine charity. . . . .

“ In our schools, all our instructions, should tend to this  
“ point, that the importance and necessity of observing the  
“ commandments of God, be well understood. These are the  
“ Statutes of the Congregation. Our constitutions are the ex-  
“ amples of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who came from Heaven,  
“ to teach men, by His words and by His deeds, how to  
“ practice and accomplish the commandments of God. . . . .

4th. “ Why do we pronounce simple vows, when there is  
“ so much more merit and honor, in the practice of solemn  
“ vows ?

“ To imitate our Blessed Lady more perfectly, devoting  
“ ourselves entirely and sincerely to God, we do not require to  
“ make a solemn vow. Our heavenly Mother, did not deem  
“ this necessary, when she consecrated herself to God. Her  
“ vow of virginity, was only known, when the Angel saluted  
“ her : “ Hail, full of grace.” We hope with the help of God, to  
“ keep our vows, as faithfully and as perfectly, as if they were  
“ solemn. It is good however, that people in the world, should  
“ see their perfect observance, in our daily conduct. We desire  
“ by the grace of God, and the help of Our heavenly Mother,  
“ to live in a manner conformable to the vows of poverty,  
“ chastity and obedience. The interior must guide the exterior.  
“ The obligation of poverty for instance, must exist within the  
“ heart, and the thought, that we have become poor, for God’s  
“ sake, should lead us, not only to its exterior practice, but its  
“ influence should direct our inclination and teach us to be  
“ poor in spirit. But, to be poor in spirit, we must be condes-  
“ cending towards others, yielding at all times, to their wants  
“ and to their humor ; for the poor, are subject to the rich,

“ children to their parents, soldiers to their captains. The  
“ poor, accept of every thing, as an alms ; they accept of their  
“ occupations, of their daily labors, as they are offered, without  
“ a reply, without a murmur, trying at all times, to satisfy their  
“ neighbor and render those services, which are incumbent  
“ on christian charity.

“ We are asked, why we prefer a secular community to the  
“ cloister, the latter being the preservation of persons of our  
“ sex ? *hence the*

“ I answer. The Blessed Virgin, whom we endeavor to  
“ imitate, was never cloistered, her solitude was interior, and  
“ for this reason, she never considered herself dispensed from  
“ exterior occupations or visits, when there was question of a  
“ good work, or of an act of charity to be exercised. She is  
“ our model, consequently, we are not cloistered, though living  
“ in a community. It is said that the cloister is the preserva-  
“ tion of persons of our sex, true ; but I feel that we cannot  
“ have a more powerful protectress than she, who was Imma-  
“ culate in her Conception ; she, who is the daughter of the  
“ Father, the Mother of the Son, and the Spouse of the Holy  
“ Ghost ; in a word, the temple of the most Holy Trinity here  
“ below. She, who contributed to the formation of the Sacred  
“ Body of the Son of God, whom we receive in the holy com-  
“ munion, to be the food and the nourishment of our souls.  
“ She, in a word, to whom the Eternal Father, confided the  
“ sacred humanity of His Verb. O most holy Virgin ! by the  
“ power which God has given you, I beg that you will cast the  
“ mantle of your gracious protection, around our little family.  
“ Defend it against its enemies, and engrave on the frontispice  
“ of this community : ‘ Under the guardianship and safe-keep-  
“ ing of the Queen of Heaven.’

“ Others, wish to know, why we embrace the toils and priva-  
“ tions of the missionary life, being greatly exposed in a coun-  
“ try like this, to be captured and put to death by the Indians ?  
“ I answer, that as the Apostles were chosen to propagate the  
“ doctrine of Jesus Christ, throughout the world, we desire to  
“ imitate their works of zeal, and for this reason, we gladly

“embrace every occasion, to spread the glad tidings of the  
“Gospel throughout the land; and if to attain this object, the  
“Apostles sacrificed their rest, their lives, and every earthly  
“pretension, why should we, Sisters of the Congregation of  
“Notre Dame, refuse to sacrifice our bodily comfort, our satis-  
“factions, our lives even, when there is question of leading  
“young girls, to the practice of a fervent Christian life! Our  
“Lord asked His Apostles, if they could drink of His chalice.  
“We ask those who wish to be members of this community, if  
“they are willing to embrace the humiliations, which are  
“attached to poverty and to ignominy. If possible, we wish  
“our community to be a perfect representation of the Aposto-  
“lic College, but with this difference, we compare the College  
“of the Apostles, to a brilliant star in the firmament, and our  
“Congregation to a flake of snow, that falls in the form of a  
“star. In a word, our actions, our daily deportment, should  
“convince those around us, that we esteem divine wisdom,  
“preferable to human prudence.

“5th. We are asked, why we prefer the public services  
“of the Parish Church, to our own private devotions, and why  
“we insist upon receiving our spiritual direction from the  
“Seminary. It was our heavenly Mother's desire, that a Semi-  
“nary should exist in the city of Montreal, and she has ever  
“testified that it was peculiarly dear to her. The Parish  
“Church is to us, a faithful copy of the Cenacle, wherein the  
“Apostles assembled, and over which, the Blessed Virgin her-  
“self presided. To honor then, our holy Mother's life, we  
“must be good parishioners, be alike governed and directed  
“by the Seminary, assist with our pupils, at all public cere-  
“monies, when it is compatible with our other duties, besides  
“receiving holy communion there, at stated times.”

Such were Sister Bourgeoys' ideas, concerning her institu-  
tion, its spirit, its peculiar practice and various duties. This  
view, which she took of all things, emanated from a heavenly  
impulse, and they have been fully justified by experience, to  
the greater good of the colony. Sister Bourgeoys considered  
the commandments of God, as the essential statutes of her com-



munity, while the practices of the Gospel she adopted for her constitutions ; but with these, she deemed a particular rule indispensable, for the preservation of its primeval spirit. Convinced that her little Congregation was pleasing to God, because it was destined to reproduce our heavenly Mother's life, here below, she could not accept, nor adopt the rules of an institution, whose peculiar aim, was entirely different from her own ; while the cloister, she deemed incompatible with the special functions of her Congregation. Her increasing sisterhood demanded more than ever, a fixed, determined, and approved rule. The venerable foundress was indeed a living model of the most sublime perfection, and she easily understood the necessity of religious observances, being written to prove obligatory, at least, for the time they are considered as such ; when they are not publicly and judicially authorized, they are exposed to certain changes, which destroy at times all the good achieved, as well as the spirit proper to these institutions. Consequently, the future of the Congregation became again a source of uneasiness to her. Several times already, the Bishop of Quebec had manifested a desire, to unite her establishment to that of the Ursulines of Quebec. He renewed his attempts on various occasions, but without success. "We have given our final decision with respect to this matter," writes Sister Bourgeoys in 1694, "when we became members of the Congregation, it was not our intention to embrace the religious life, according to the tenets of the Ursuline rule." His Lordship insisted no further, for the moment, but simply gave them to understand, that sooner or later, circumstances would compel them to yield to his desires. These repeated contradictions only served to strengthen Sister Bourgeoys' confidence in God, and she felt that the less she depended on man, the more firmly could she lean on heavenly protection.

She was far advanced in years at this time, and reflecting that Bishop de Saint-Vallier, had not as yet consented to sanction her rule, it was but natural, that she should apprehend at times, his influence upon her community after her death. All her intellectual vigor and energy were brought forth at this

time. She consulted, entreated, and prayed, that this last legitimate desire of her heart might be realized before

“Going to that bourne,  
Whence travellers ne’er return.”

She wrote to her devoted friends in France; they responded to her call. All that could be done was done, but consolations tarried. Finally, in a letter written about this time by Mr. Tronson, of Saint Sulpice, we read as follows :

“The particular esteem, in which I hold your Congregation, my dear Sister, would suffice of itself, to make me do all in my power to assist you, with regard to the compilation, you wish to lay down for its greater good. I strongly approve of your determination, but I really do not know, if Mr. de Valens will consent to do what you wish, as he does not think himself competent for the task. However, as it is in your interest, I shall write to him on this subject and a few words at the same time, to Mr. Dollier de Casson, who will judge of this; if he thinks that Mr. de Valens can undertake the work, I consent most willingly that he should do so. Should he succeed, it will be a great source of consolation to me, because it will add to your good work, already so advantageously known.” Bishop de Saint-Vallier, informed of these proceedings, resolved to compile the rule himself. Consequently, he wrote to the Sisters, requesting a copy of their observances up to this period. His long cherished desire of uniting Sister Bourgeoys’ institution to that of the Ursulines of Quebec, still lived within his heart, and he always hoped for its realization. So, in compiling this rule, his Lordship introduced several practices in use among these religious, so as to render them familiar to the members of the Congregation, and thereby gain them more easily, to accede to his wishes. The cloister was again mentioned, nay, the Prelate almost insisted on this point, and if he relaxed, it was due to the consideration of persons, whose views and ideas he respected, and who succeeded in convincing him, that the cloister was incompatible with the peculiar functions of the Congregation. Not-

withstanding, he placed the rule of Saint Augustin, at the head of their institutions, and inserted a part of the Ursuline ceremonial, for the reception of the Sisters as members of the Congregation of Notre-Dame. He also exacted that a dowry should be required from all those, who entered her community ; still more that the Sisters should engage themselves, by a vow solemn and perpetual, to practice poverty, chastity and obedience under pain of mortal sin. These rules finished, he took them with him to Ville-Marie, in the month of May, 1694. The Sisters were extremely surprised, when they looked over the manuscript, and read the new observances laid down therein, particularly the special vow of obedience to himself. Bishop de Saint-Vallier had never concealed his designs respecting the cloister, and the Sisters feared, that this special vow might compel them to contract this obligation later. However, no decision was to come from them, before they had given sufficient time, to prayer and reflection. In consequence, the Sisters requested the Prelate, to leave this compilation with them for a certain time, that they might confer together upon the subject, before making any formal acceptance. Bishop de Saint-Vallier, did not expect this ; he was on the point of leaving for France, and wished all things to be regulated before his departure. Here was a strange perplexity for all. Sister Bourgeoys was, no doubt, grieved at his disappointment, and represented to his Lordship, in the most respectful terms, that they recognized his lawful authority, and understood that, from him alone, they should receive the rule of their Congregation, but withal, this same rule according to their idea should be proportioned to the state of life they had embraced ; state, in which a number of them had lived for upwards of forty years, and which had already received the sanction of the first Bishop of Quebec, as well as marks of royal approbation from Louis the XIV. After some remarks, his Lordship requested the Sisters to point out those articles, for which they felt so extreme a repugnance. They did so, and were again strongly urged to accept the entire rule, as laid down, with the promise, that they could be dispensed from the fulfilment of these obli-

gations, when necessity required. This could not be, Sister Bourgeoys understood, that to accept a rule, then to be dispensed from the obligations, it imposed, was inconsistent with that high appreciation which should be given to a community rule. Her firmness, led his Lordship to desist from further entreaties; he consented to leave the manuscript in their hands, and promised to confer with Mr. Tronson on the matter, as soon as he reached France. The Sisters lost no time, but hastened during this interval, to explain the whole affair, to their kind and devoted friend in Paris. They made known their desires and their apprehensions, with that confiding simplicity, it is so natural to use, when speaking to a father and benefactor. Sister Bourgeoys wrote too, a special letter, wherein her aged fingers, traced that peculiar and persuasive language habitual to her. She recalled every detail and circumstance connected with her vocation; but, with that humility which characterized her, she said nothing to her own advantage. Not a word, that would have led any one to suppose, that she had taken a greater part in the foundation of her community, than those first companions; who came to share her labors of love and zeal.

"The offer you made me last year, to write to you whenever I thought proper, gives me full liberty, to make known the real motives, which prompted the establishment of our Congregation in Montreal. With your usual kindness, you have undertaken to examine the rule given to us; and this great charity on your part, helps me to overcome my repugnance, and make known to you the final end or aim of our institution." Then alluding to Mr. Jendret's attempts to form a community of this kind in the City of Troyes, she recalls the last words, he addressed to her when leaving for Canada: "God, may desire for Montreal, what He did not desire for Troyes," she continues. "To honor and imitate the Blessed Virgin, in her daily life, it seems to me, that the Sisters should always attend the Parish Church, receive their spiritual direction therefrom, and be interred there. All the sisters must be equal, to that degree, that a Superior after

"her discharge from office, can be employed in any other department, for which she is judged competent, and all this to honor our Blessed Lady's ordinary life. These are my remarks concerning the rule, but they will not prevent me from being satisfied with your decision, whatever it may be ; for I can safely say, that my only desire is to see God faithfully served in this community." No one could feel a deeper interest in the Congregation, than the incomparable woman, who had been raised up by God, to preside over its foundation. How many ardent supplications, she addressed to Heaven for its spiritual welfare ; how many sighs and tears, sacrifices and voluntary penances, to obtain the fulfilment of God's designs upon her institution. Her trembling fingers again resume the pen, to make further remarks concerning the rule and conducive to the greater good of all. In her letter to Mr. Tronson, dated October 1694. She refers as follows to the subject of recreations. "These hours of recreation, taken outside of the community, are not at all becoming for persons, who are consecrated to the service of God, not only because of the many inconveniences and dangers, which may result from this, but still more because of the injury it might cause to the missions, where the Sisters are few in number ; besides young persons, who are disinclined to remain at home, will make it a point of duty to be absent, and this we must prevent by every possible means."

Mr. Tronson was wonderfully edified, by the perusal of these letters ; they inspired him with a still deeper esteem, for the humble foundress ; and through these communications, he discovered the graces and privileges, which God had showered so profusely upon her. He writes in April 1696 :

*"My Dear Sister,*

"Your two last letters have clearly demonstrated the conduct of Divine Providence, in your regard, and the inestimable grace conferred, when God made choice of you, to establish the Congregation of Notre Dame in Montreal. Your institution is entitled to our warmest admiration, since it has been

“ the source of so much edification, and so zealous in promoting God’s glory. We know what fruits of salvation it has produced, and what special benedictions it has received from God’s munificent hand. We shall esteem ourselves happy at all times, to contribute in any way, towards an increase of fervor among its members, that they may faithfully guard its primitive spirit. I have gladly embraced the opportunity of speaking to the Bishop of Quebec, concerning your constitutions. I have made known your difficulties to him, difficulties which are in no ways exaggerated ; and I feel confident that he will attend to all this. At least, he has come to the conclusion, that he will not compel you to embrace the religious life, by pronouncing solemn vows, as this would change the entire nature of your institution. So far as I can judge, you will be satisfied with the rest.”

Many other important services did Mr. Tronson render to Sister Bourgeoys’ Congregation ; and his counsels so judicious at all times, gave Bishop de Saint-Vallier, a deep respect and esteem for all his decisions ; the prelate finally understood, that, as God alone, has power to inspire means of sanctification, within his church, by the establishment of religious institutions ; He alone has the essential authority, to give to these orders, that peculiar spirit which should be their life, and that peculiar form, which is to distinguish one from another. Consequently, he reformed the rules, which he had at first prepared, and adapted them, to the views and desires of the venerable foundress. Some time afterwards, we read the following, in a letter from Mr. Tronson to Mr. Dollier de Casson : “ I send you forthwith, the manuscript containing the rules, which the Bishop of Quebec has revised for the Sisters of the Congregation. As my infirmities prevent me from writing to the good Sisters myself, you will oblige me by assuring them of my esteem and good wishes, presenting them at the same time, the memoirs I send you. Assure Sister Bourgeoys and the Superior in particular, of the deep and sincere interest, that I take in everything connected with their institution ; and add, that I do not think any article of the present rule,

"will be a source of annoyance to them now. Should any-  
"thing of the kind occur, however, let them refer the matter to  
"his Lordship."

Mr. Tronson's decision was to the Sisters, as a voice from Heaven.

The happy day dawned at last ; it came with June, 1698, two years only previous to Sister Bourgeoys' death, and as her eyes rested upon the precious document, she sang down in the inmost depths of her grateful soul, her *Nunc Dimittis*. Bishop de Saint-Vallier soon came to confirm the glad tidings ; he brought with him the long desired compilation,—tears of joy were shed, the rule had been purchased at a dear price, that of prayer, humiliation and sacrifice.

Finally, the 24th of the same month, this rule was solemnly accepted by the entire community, in the following manner :—

"We accept with all possible respect and submission, the  
"compilation of rules, which we have this day received, from  
"the hands of our Right Reverend and Illustrious Prelate, Mr.  
"de Saint-Vallier, Bishop of Quebec. We have read and  
"examined these rules several times, and consider them suit-  
"able for our community, and for the greater good of each of  
"its members. May God strengthen the firm resolution we  
"have taken, to practice them, with all possible fervor and  
"exactitude.

"In faith of which, we sign, this 24th of June, 1698."

Then follow the signatures :

"SISTER MARIE BARBIER, *Superior*.

"SISTER CATHERINE CHARLY, *Assistant*.

"SISTER MARGARET LEMOINE.

"SISTER MARGARET BOURGEOYS."



## CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH.

The 25th of June 1698.—Sister Bourgeoys' emotions on this occasion.—A second ceremony.—Same privilege granted to the Sister missionaries, in the district of Quebec.—Sister Bourgeoys' request to the Bishop of Quebec.—Humility and disinterestedness of the Venerable foundress.—Favors bestowed upon her Congregation.—Bishop de Saint Vallier visits Miss LeBer for the first time.—Two distinguished strangers are allowed to enter the cell of the recluse.

It was a glorious morning, that 25th of June, 1698, as it came with its golden wealth of sunshine and happiness. Its gorgeous beauty was everywhere, dancing on the rippling waters, illuminating tower and steeple, beautifying the tinted corolla in its bed of green, beaming in, through window and trellis, gladdening all around. In streams of varied light, it played around the humble chapel, wherein Virgin hands, had scattered incense, gem and flower.

**"The Altar, decked in bright array,  
Bespoke no common festal day."**

Dawn, solemn morning, dawn ! It had dawned, and after years of continued expectation and hopeful trust, the Sisters were to receive at last, from the hands of their lawful Prelate, that rule, which was to be Sister Bourgeoys' crowning consolation, here below. They came then on this day of Jubilee, to kneel before the Altar, and make aloud a solemn protestation, that "the Lord was indeed their inheritance, that really and truly, His yoke was sweet, and His burden light." None knew it better. There was something grand, something novel, in this act of theirs. It was not the fair young novice, just budding into womanhood, with all the bright anticipations of a happy future before her, who snapt asunder, the chain of life's legitimate joys, and came with her first pure devotion, with the aspirations of her youthful heart, to kneel before the Altar, as Spouse of a Crucified God, and receive upon her frail shoulders,

His nuptial gift, "The Cross." Not so, and withal, there was an enchantment about the scene.

It was the forty years devotion, receiving its hundredfold here below ; a recompense awarded to the perseverance of heroism, and to that pure charity which we call perfect, because it is the love of God. Bishop de Saint-Vallier soon entered the little chapel, accompanied by several distinguished members of the clergy :

Mr. Dollier de Casson, Superior of Saint-Sulpice.

Mr. Glandelet, V. G. of Quebec.

Mr. de Valens, S. S.

Mr. Geoffroy, S. S.

Mr. Meriel, S. S.

Mr. Priat, S. S.

Mr. Villermola, S. S.

After a brief exhortation, upon the excellence of their engagements, his Lordship commenced the August Sacrifice. It was a solemn moment, and as the hour drew near, silvery echoes seemed floating by, and they whispered His loving invitation,

" 'Veni sponsi,' from the world apart,  
I thy Beloved, will fill thy heart."

The Holy Sacrifice continued, and as "Domine non sum dignus," died away upon the ear, Angels extended their golden wings, and bowed in rapt adoration, as Jesus, the Lord of Hosts, passed by : "Jam hiems transiit. "Now, is the winter past, the rain is over and gone. Arise my beloved and come." And echo gave back : "Come my beloved, come, that I may inwardly possess Thee, and clasp Thee in the chaste embraces of my soul." The vow was pronounced, to each of the Sisters, Bishop de Saint-Vallier gave the name of a heavenly Protector, and all was over. Sister Bourgeoys turned, from the Altar, as Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament ; as she stood in the sunshine, her gray hairs seemed changed to gold, and her aged limbs enshrined in a halo of golden light, while she hymned triumphantly her

"Te Deum" of thanksgiving. Was she not supremely happy? Many times since then, has the same solemn impressive scene been renewed. Youth and beauty have again and again, placed their tribute upon the Altar; the incense clouds have oft times veiled a sacrifice, pure, generous and grand, but ne'er, me thinks, did sacrifice draw Heaven so near to earth, as on that bright June morning, two hundred years ago.

Some days after this first ceremony, Tuesday, the first of July, the convent bell summoned the Sisters to their community room, from which they soon defiled, singing the psalm, "Lætatus Sum." They entered the chapel, where Bishop de Saint-Vallier awaited them; and after a short allocution, from his Lordship, the Sisters pronounced the last vow, by which they bound themselves, to remain all their lives, Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, practising inviolably the simple vows, they had previously made.

Perhaps, dear reader, you would like to see the names of these first venerable companions, of the worthy foundress of the Congregation of Notre Dame; that is, the names of the professed Sisters, occupied at this time, at the mother house. The Sister missionaries, as we shall see later, enjoyed this same privilege, a short time afterwards, in the city of Quebec.

Professed Sisters at the mother house in 1698:

Sister Marie Barbier, of the Assumption, Superior of the Congregation of Notre Dame.

- " Catherine Charly, of the Angels, Assistant.
- " Margaret Lemoine, of the Holy Ghost.
- " Margaret Bourgeoys, of the Blessed Sacrament.
- " Elisabeth de la Bertache, of Saint Catherine.
- " Claude Durand, of the Ascension.
- " Margaret Gariépy, of Saint Augustin.
- " Theresa Remy, of the Annunciation.
- " Louisa Richard, of Saint Bernard.
- " Maria Gagnon, of Saint Joachim.
- " Jane Lemoine, of Saint Charles.
- " Maria Laperle, of Saint Louis.

Sister Margaret Leroy, of the Conception.

“ Maria Caron, of the Victory.

“ Margaret Amyot, of the Presentation.

“ Maria Prémont, of Saint John.

“ Maria-Charlotte Vinet, of the Nativity.

“ Margaret David, of Saint Peter.

“ Catherine Sahau, of the Holy Cross.

“ Mary-Theresa Senécal, of Saint Michael.

“ Frances Larrivée, of Saint Alexis.

“ Mary-Magdalena d'Ailleboust, of the Incarnation.

“ Jane Gourdon, of the Resurrection.

“ Catherine du Haut Mesnil, of the Visitation.

Sister Bourgeoys, like unto the holy man Simeon, had nothing more to desire here below. Strong, in the mighty strength of her God, she felt His power; and desirous of manifesting her sincere and lively gratitude, for the numberless benefits she had received, from His omnipotent goodness and love, she cast herself at the feet of Bishop de Saint-Vallier, and entreated him to grant her one favor more. “Allow me,” she asked, “to retire into perfect obscurity, and spend the remainder of my days in the practice of entire obedience; let me be forever exempt from all office of honor or dignity, in the community.” This sentiment of humility was, no doubt, inspired by Heaven; so that her daughters after having admired the heroism and magnanimity of her virtues, as foundress and Superior, might now see in her, the fitting model of a perfect Sister of the Congregation, in a more humble sphere. Deeply affected at the sight of her extreme humility, the worthy Prelate granted her request, on condition however, that she would always take an active part in the elective assemblies.

Few, even among the Saints, have given a more sublime example of humility, than that evinced by Sister Bourgeoys, at this moment. The Congregation was her all, here below; she had planted the tiny seed, fostered tenderly the frail plant; and now, when the towering tree was extending its branches,

and giving shelter to all around ; when its golden harvest was about to be garnered in, she stepped aside, that others might reap the fruit, for which she had toiled. God could not but bless her, and because of her, bless her work, which had now passed into other hands. Sister Bourgeoys' desires were now accomplished ; in the state of obscurity and humility she had chosen, she was the first in the practice of the rule, in mortification and humble submission ; and thus she spent the last hours of that life, which is now slowly declining, towards the tomb, towards eternity.

Several youthful missions, beautiful [in the heroism of their first beginnings, generously devoted in their works of zeal and love, self-sacrificing in word and deed ; glorious emanations from the mother-house, they were justly entitled to a share in the privileges and abundant graces, which had made so happy, the Congregation of Ville-Marie. Nor were they forgotten, the Sister missionaries, whose respective duties had prevented them, from attending this home festival ; for the Sisters of Ville-Marie, presented a petition to Bishop de Saint Vallier, requesting him to extend his favors, to the absent members of the family circle, and render them participants in those blessings, which he had so kindly dispensed to them. They wrote :

“ Penetrated with sincere sentiments of respect and gratitude, for the numberless benefits, received at your Lordships hands ; doubly thankful for this crowning gift of your zeal and devotedness, towards our little community, for this inappreciable gift of rules, to guide us in the path of perfection, we come now to plead in favor of our absent Sisters, dispersed in the missions around Quebec.

“ We supplicate your Lordship, to make them sharers, in the graces and blessings, which you have granted to us, members of the mother-house.

“ Permit that they should accept this same rule, and consecrate themselves anew, to the service of God, by the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as the final vow of stability, as we have done ; so that all being united, by the same bonds and the same engagements, we

" may more perfectly aspire to the love of Jesus and Mary.  
" We ask this favor of your Lordship, with all the ardor of our  
" hearts, and subscribe ourselves, with the most profound respect and submission  
" Of your Lordship,  
The humble and grateful Daughters and Servants,  
The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame.

Bishop de Saint Vallier completed his good work. The Sister missionaries, scattered in the country wilds, around Quebec, were summoned to this city, the 4th of August, of this same year; and in the private chapel of the Seminary of Quebec, they accepted the rule, and pronounced their vows, as had done before them, their Sisters of Ville-Marie. Many other favors, did Bishop de Saint Vallier, bestow upon the community, he had learned to love so well. Benedictions and indulgences, came like celestial visits, to sanctify and make easy, each daily task, and render less arduous the monotony and routine of every day life. Angels gazed upon the scene, and the nine heavenly choirs, intoned anew, their canticles of adoration and thanks giving, for now their God was truly glorified; upon these western shores, resounded praise, honor and glory, to the living God. Did not the prophetic glance of Isaias see these things, when he sang forth. " The land that  
" was desolate, shall be glad, the wilderness shall rejoice and  
" shall flourish like the lily. It shall bud forth and shall blossom,  
" and shall rejoice with joy and praise: the glory of Libanus  
" is given to it, the beauty of Carmel and Saron; they shall  
" see the glory of the Lord and the beauty of our God."  
(Isaias chap. xxxv.)

Bishop de Saint Vallier, was no doubt consoled, by these different circumstances, so well calculated to gladden his heart and fill it with cheering assurances, for the future. Perhaps too, no act of his episcopal career, was more productive of good to the colony, or tended more efficaciously to promote God's glory, than these last manifestations of good will, towards the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame.

It was during this last visit to Ville-Marie, that the Bishop of Quebec, saw for the first time, the pious recluse, Miss LeBer, of whom we have already spoken. The angelic life, led by this truly heroic woman, was the theme of every tongue. Two english gentleman of rank, who were sojourning for a time at Ville-Marie, and who were well acquainted with the LeBer family, begged of Bishop de Saint Vallier, the permission to visit the recluse, in her cell.

No doubt, they were a little incredulous with regard to the wonderful things said, concerning her. The Prelate assured in advance, that these gentlemen could not, but be strongly influenced at the sight of this Angelic being, "whose very appearance," writes one of the devoted nuns, who watched over her childhood, "bore a marked resemblance to the exquisite painting of the Angels, by Raphael."

They were led to her cell, but words can never describe their amazement, upon beholding the richest heiress in Canada, dwelling in this poor and obscure abode.

Voluntary poverty ! Voluntary obscurity ! Her dress, the simple furniture of her room attracted their attention. She was clothed in a coarse woollen garment, with an apron of the same material, and wore upon her feet, coarse straw shoes, which she had made herself, from the husks of indian corn ; hers, was a simple straw bed, with a bundle of straw for her pillow. These strangers could not conceal their astonishment, and one of them, a protestant minister, requested Miss LeBer to inform him, why she condemned herself to such a life, when every luxury and comfort that the world could offer, was at her command. She answered agreeably : " That a magnet had " drawn her to this spot, and kept her separated, from the " outer world and from all the false allurements of life." They asked for an explanation. At this moment, Miss LeBer opened the little window, through which she was accustomed to receive holy Communion, and prostrating herself before the Tabernacle, she exclaimed : " Behold the magnet which has drawn " me hither, the Adorable Body of Our Lord, really and truly " present in the Blessed Eucharist ! He, it is, who ke . . me



" here, His love enchains me to this spot." Then, she burst forth into a strain of eloquence, concerning this sacred mystery ; and as the burning words of her love for God, fell upon their ear, they looked on in mute astonishment, then withdrew without uttering a single word.

Miss LeBer was endowed with great fluency of speech, and religious convictions were so strongly impressed upon her mind, that when she conversed upon any pious subject, she seemed really inspired.

Sometime after this interview, the strangers returned to their native land, and when relating the circumstance of their visit to Canada, they alluded to Sister LeBer, as one of the greatest wonders, they had ever beheld, and marvelled at the strange impression, which her sight and her words had produced upon them. Perchance they are now singing with her, the eternal *Alleluia* ! (1)

(1) Mr. de Montgolfier, who became Superior of Saint Sulpice, some fifty years after Miss LeBer's death, tells us, that he was well informed, that the protestant minister alluded to above, yielding to his convictions, concerning the truth and the beauties of Our Holy Faith, subsequently abjured his errors, and became a member of the One True-fold.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH.

**Result of Sister Bourgeoys' interior trials. Occupation of the venerable foundress in her seventy-eighth year.—Last crosses borne by the heroic Sister.—Instructions given by her, on the different degrees of charity towards God, and towards our neighbor.—How Sister Bourgeoys prepared for her Congregation, and what she asked of God for its members, for its future.—“Go, and I will never abandon thee.”**

Sorrow and grief have, at times, beautiful results. Will you not think so, dear reader, when you learn that the edifying details, which we have so imperfectly narrated, in this little work, were made known to us by Sister Bourgeoys, herself, in her seventy-eighth year?

God had led her onward, step by step, lovingly and providentially, through the many scenes of her long and eventful career; and her perfect correspondance to every new-born inspiration, merited that the work of grace, which had been carried on in her soul, should be made known far and wide; that future generations might call her blessed, and God be glorified in his saints. Humility was a distinctive trait in Sister Bourgeoys' character; consequently, the heavenly favors received, the daily prodigies wrought beneath the pressure of divine grace, would never have escaped her lips, had not the truly painful ordeal, through which she passed, at this period of her life, compelled her to give utterance to the pent-up feelings of her heart, and thus acquaint us, with the events which rendered her life so precious, in the sight of God and man. No marvel then, that the touching simplicity of her words, should win our deep admiration. Chosen instrument in the hands of God, to perpetuate beneath the forest shades of Canada, His works of mercy, love and zeal; she came thoroughly imbued with that Apostolic spirit which the twelve of old, had received from their Divine Master. She came, divested of every pretension to the comforts and luxuries of life, but rich in that spirit of detach-

ment and mortification, which mark the disciples of the Divine Exile, of Him who said : " The birds have their nests, the foxes their holes, but the Son of God has not whereon to rest His weary head." Acting upon this same principle, when came the hour to accomplish, more directly the will of God, in laying the foundations of a community, destined the first to imitate the Blessed Virgin's life, here below, she willed, that this same spirit of Apostolic zeal and detachment, should animate her followers. Humility, poverty and mortification, formed then, the ground-work of her institution, and gave a peculiar hue of sanctity to her religious endeavors. No mortal pen, shall ever record the heroic acts, practised in those days of pristine fervor, within the lowly walls of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Interior detachment from all earthly things, is incumbent on all Christians, and should be put in practice in every condition of life, though more strictly enjoined upon those, who receive a special calling to take up their cross, and tread the path of Calvary. Sister Bourgeoys took up her cross of voluntary poverty and detachment, when leaving for the first time, the loved shores of her own dear France, she came to the Indians bleak and dreary home. Her first companions too, took up their cross, with the same self-sacrificing generous spirit, and nobly their work was done. We read, " they lived in a spirit, " of perfect renunciation, seeking but one thing alone, the " glory of God, devoting themselves to those around them, " without murmuring at the pain and humiliation, inseparable " from acts of outward charity. They imitated Mary in all " things, earned their bread by the labor of their hands, so as " to be a burden to none, and when the work of the day was " over, they rested their weary frames upon a little bed of straw." And thus they lived, strangers to ease and comfort. So long as the Sisters were few in number, these severe practices of mortification were easily maintained ; but when the increasing members of the community, united different ages and different constitutions, it was understood that a life so austere, could not be led by all, if they wished to adhere to the primitive functions of the institution, functions varied and arduous. Consequently,

it was judged proper to modify the daily observances, conformably to the age and strength of the greater number ; this decision which took place, shortly before the death of Sister Bourgeoys, was the cause of pairs and conflicts, which disturbed her peace of mind, and led her to fear and tremble, lest the work should perish in other hands. It was the last drop in her cup of bitterness. Hearing that these modifications were to be made in the rule, she became seriously alarmed, for she would not, that the slightest relaxation should taint the freshness of that fervor, which had rejoiced her sight, and consoled her maternal heart, for so many long years. Several times already, had this same anxiety saddened her heart. In 1679, as we have mentioned ; again in 1694, more vivid apprehensions lest any act of hers, should render less agreeable to Heaven, the little family over which she presided in the name of her heavenly Mother. Ah ! God alone could comprehend her grief and sorrow on this subject. " I wish to repair all my faults," she writes, " but how shall I do so ? I desire to return to God by the right path, but seem unable to find it. I feel uneasy, I tremble ! Our primitive rule is no longer observed, and no doubt, my negligence and want of firmness have been the cause of this. Our dear Lord will, withdraw all His graces from our community, because of my great unworthiness. There was a time, when the entire sisterhood was contented with the simplest and poorest food ; then, we took all possible care of the sick and infirm, who were satisfied as are the poor, with what they received ; to-day, our infirmary is in a better condition, than necessity seems to require, extreme neatness and the finest linen make us scrupulously exacting. In a word, I see no more signs of our long cherished poverty. When Bishop de Laval first visited our community, he was well pleased with our simple straw beds, and their coarse coverlets, without pillows or sheets, but that will not do now. When we first opened our missions, we endeavored to imitate the Apostles, and earn our bread by the labor of our hands, and we succeeded, as God knows. Now, we must have mattresses and sheets, comforts

"they tell me, of absolute necessity. I am told, that it is essential, I should take care of my own health and live, so as not to contract sickness or infirmity; but, ah ! I hear at the same time, a more eloquent and a more persuasive voice, which comes to me from on high, and from my own experience, a voice that whispers to my inmost heart and asks, why confidence in God's Providence should fail me now; that Providence which has watched over me so tenderly, for more than fifty years. Was it not a divine impulse, when I commenced to lead, not an austere life in the desert, but a life simple and poor, as befitted a child of Mary?"

Sister Bourgeoys was at this time, one of the counsellors given to the newly elected Superior, Sister Barbier, and had now attained her seventy-fifth year. As these alterations in the community caused her painful feelings; it was thought advisable for her to remain at the infirmary in company with Sister Crolo, who was unable to follow the Community, referring to this circumstance, she adds: "For the last four years, I have almost been a constant occupant of the infirmary, amusing myself with a little sewing, I sleep, and take my meals there, on account of Sister Crolo, whose infirmities prevent her, from going to the common refectory. I seldom go out to church as we have Mass said in the house; all this, they tell me because of my age. Then it came into my mind, that I should go to France, for I had a strong conviction, that God demanded more perfection than I beheld, from a community which is all His own work. I made known these thoughts at times; but was told to remain perfectly quiet, that I would not have to answer for these proceedings." We cannot but admire the designs of God upon this favored soul, and acknowledge the hand of Divine Providence in the interior trials, endured by Sister Bourgeoys at the close of her career. "That spirit of perfect disengagement," writes one of her biographers, "to which she had formed her first companions, was beyond ordinary strength, and could not, in consequence, be practised to the same degree, among all the Sisters. God wished to give them, a perfect example of firm and constant

"perseverance in this path of austerity, to teach them, that penance and mortification, should be always in vigor, but without prejudice to the necessities of health and temperament." Sister Bourgeoys continues: "I know from my own experience, that bodily ease is taken with too much facility. Nature will consent betimes, to have a little scruple, but it vanishes as quickly as it came, and this is always the case when these comforts are taken, through consideration for others. How hard then, after a certain time spent in an indolent, dissipated life, to return to the narrow path of religious perfection. Our mortal enemy, who is ever going about, seeking whom he may devour, comes then, to prop up our poor weak nature, with his artful insinuations, suggesting a relaxation, which proves the more injurious, because of the satisfaction it affords."

"In establishing the Congregation of Notre-Dame," writes the historian above quoted, "Sister Bourgeoys was given as a model of fervor, to those who shared with her in this good work, and though she submitted will and heart, to what her Superiors deemed indispensable alterations in her rule, nevertheless she persevered until her latest breath, in that life and spirit, which marked the commencement of her institution."

In truth, a different line of conduct on her part, would have been pernicious to her Congregation; "she would have introduced a spirit of relaxation, in leading others to suppose, that this act of condescension to human frailty, was the exact measure of perfection required." Again these different incidents, so peculiarly painful to Sister Bourgeoys, compelled her to make known in detail, every circumstance connected with her vocation for Canada, and the heavenly light, she there received, concerning the excellence and the perfection of the particular spirit of her institution.

"For some time past," she writes, "I have been laboring under a strong conviction, that God demands something more, than ordinary perfection from this Congregation. It seemed to me, that I should become, as it were, the Jonas of this community, and warn those who err, even at the risk of

“ my life. Yielding to this inspiration, I offered myself with  
“ all my heart to God, to accomplish His good pleasure ;  
“ I felt convinced, that He willed me to do so. A few months  
“ later, this same thought came back, more vehemently, than  
“ before. It was then, I determined to act, and to cor-  
“ respond faithfully to the inspiration I had received. I spoke  
“ of these things to Bishop de Saint-Vallier and to my director,  
“ Mr. Caille. They in turn obliged me to speak of all this to  
“ my Superior. I obeyed, and wrote all that I deemed neces-  
“ sary at that moment ; I made use of my pen, and accepted  
“ this humiliation, of making known my interior dispositions,  
“ in the firm hope, that God would deliver me from the  
“ punishment, which I felt I merited, on account of my un-  
“ faithfulness in His service. I am told, to consider myself  
“ fortunate, in not having to render an account of all that takes  
“ place around me, and to take charge of myself only. Perhaps  
“ when my reasons are heard, they will think otherwise.”

Sister Bourgeoys then relates the many special favors, she had received from God, in her infancy, the circumstances of her call to Canada, her frequent journeys to France, the unceasing Providence of God in her regard ; in a word, she related all that we have written, and thus became her own historian, in the seventy-eighth year of her age. While thus occupied, in 1698, she performed the exercises of her spiritual retreat ; convincing proof of the purity of her motives, in this undertaking, she says : “ I must discern, if it be really and  
“ truly the pure love of God, which prompts me to speak and,  
“ to write. I pray His divine goodness, to make known His  
“ holy will, when and in the manner He pleases, while I  
“ submit in advance to all that He ordains.” She then continues to write, and in placing her own religious views upon paper, she exposes to her children, the true means, by which they may attain the perfection of their special vocation. ( She enlightens them, not only as regards their personal sanctification, but shows them too, in what manner they are called to contribute, towards the salvation of souls. We will place here, dear reader, a few of her thoughts on this subjects :



"It is evident," she writes, "that if we wish to draw down the blessing of God, upon our community, if we wish His grace to rest upon our works of zeal, we must resolve to destroy within us, all that is contrary to the love of God and of our neighbor. Is it not a divine law, to love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves? Love or charity has many names, and assumes a new form, according to the diversity of circumstances. For instance, there is the charity, we exercise towards strangers, visitors, passers-by, associates, friends and relatives, and finally pure love or charity, which we owe to God alone. The sight of a stranger, touches the heart with what we call compassionate love, particularly if the storms of persecution and adversity have driven him, from home and country.

"We care for the passersby, because we generally receive from them gain and profit; we like the poor, because they take away our superfluities; we love our associates, because their loss would do us injury; we cling to our friends, because we enjoy their company, to our relatives, on account of the affection they bear us, and the good we receive or expect from them. All these different sentiments have a common source, nature. Pure love alone, seeks the heart of God, and obtains the desired end. This pure love of God, is precious because it is rare, earthly things may not approach it, neither good nor evil may in any way affect it; it has nothing to do with self-interest, and the soul in possession of so great a gift, is indifferent to sickness or health, prosperity or adversity, consolation or desolation; God, is all in all. Those who live in a religious community, have every facility for obtaining this degree of pure love: daily observances, vows of religion, maxims of the Gospel, and God's grace which is showered so abundantly, upon those who are consecrated to Him. The first step, in the attainment of this pure love, is to purify our souls, by perfect contrition, and our bodies by the practices of penance. The lamp that burns before the Blessed Sacrament in the Sanctuary, will make us understand, how the interior soul unites itself intimately, with

“ its Lord and Saviour. If the oil is clear and the wick well-prepared, the flame will consume even to the last drop. This oil represents our souls, the wick our bodies, the flame, the Holy Ghost or the love of God. If the oil is not pure, it will not give light ; if the wick is not prepared, it will not consume the oil. In like manner, if the Holy Ghost does not find our souls prepared, and our bodies purified, he cannot inflame them, with the fire of His love.”

The pious Sister then continues to explain the different qualities of that charity, we should bear our neighbour. “ If we wish to attain the perfection of charity, we must abstain from all those acts, which are in any way contrary to the love, we should bear our fellow beings : slander, calumny, mockery, in a word all those faults, that might cast a slur upon act of theirs. God not only commands us to love our neighbour, but He commands us to love him in such a way, that all our words and actions, may be to him, so many sources of edification. I have always remarked, that we gain more by yielding for God’s love, to the exigency of our fellow creatures, than we derive advantage from a different way of acting, such as law-suits, quarrels and misunderstandings.”

Then, to exemplify her idea, concerning the love of God and the love of our neighbour, she traces the portrait of a religious person, who has only the semblance, of these virtues, which she desired so much to see, in the hearts and in the actions of all her daughters.

“ Ah ! my dear Sisters,” would she often say, “ let that true spirit of cordiality and love, which shed so much lustre, upon the pristine days of christianity, reappear, at least, in our midst. We know that the primitive Christians, formed but one heart and one soul. Might we not consider the Blessed Virgin, as the superior of this primitive community, as she is of ours to-day ? Was she not the bond of their union, their guide and their directress, after the death of her Divine Son ? Ah ! members of her Congregation, let us be thus united ; for without this union, we cannot flatter ourselves, that we are

“ living under the auspices of our heavenly Mother. That  
“ sanctifying spirit which has gathered us here together, should  
“ be the bond, which unites our hearts and souls. Let us live  
“ then, in charity, simplicity, humility, poverty, disinterested-  
“ ness, and abandon ourselves into the hands of God. Our  
“ heavenly directress exacts this from us. Those who are not  
“ penetrated with these sentiments, should be rejected from  
“ our family circle, or at most, looked upon as members, whose  
“ difformity destroys the beauty of the entire body.” She con-  
tinues : “ The religious soul who truly loves her God, performs  
“ all her actions in a spirit of faith, she sees Him in all things,  
“ and submits her will and her understanding, on all occasions,  
“ to those who are placed over her, to command. Guided by  
“ this same spirit of faith, she neither reasons nor censures, and  
“ mortifications and other good works are performed in secret,  
“ for she knows, that He who seeth in secret, will reward.

“ To nature, she gives the strict indispensable, and spiri-  
tualizes even, this necessity. In the interior life, there are two  
“ distinct paths to be encountered—the one, leading to perfec-  
tion, the other, to perdition. The first is pointed out to us  
“ by divine wisdom ; the second by human prudence. It is  
“ important that we should be thoroughly acquainted, with all  
“ that concerns these two paths. To accomplish this, let us  
“ compare one with the other. Divine wisdom inspires us with  
“ a desire of perfect detachment, principally, from our own will  
“ and judgment ; besides incessant mortification of the senses,  
“ our temper and passions ; it teaches us, to suffer willingly con-  
tempt and humiliation, to bear patiently with poverty and its  
“ many inconveniences, to accept in a penitential spirit, all that  
“ is repugnant to nature, denying ourselves everything, that is  
“ not absolutely necessary.

“ Human prudence, on the contrary, seeks self in all, and at  
“ all times ; likes ease and comfort, satisfies every sense accord-  
“ ing to its demand, ever applauding and overating its own  
“ deeds, fears humiliation and if blamed, has a thousand means  
“ of covering its faults, and oftentimes at the expense of truth.

“ Human prudence allows that we should serve God, but

“ with reserve ; that we should take precautions for the hour of  
“ need ; that it is good to keep to the comforts of life ; that it  
“ is essential to health, to be well lodged and well fed ; that we  
“ pray more fervently in a comfortable posture ; that a life of  
“ privation brings with it, many infirmities and much suffering ;  
“ that to bear with ignorance and contempt, is to be wanting  
“ in dignity, and gives to others an opportunity to offend God,  
“ by trying our patience. Divine wisdom would have us seek  
“ devotion, and for that reason content ourselves, with the  
“ books that are chosen for us, and which contribute the most  
“ to our advancement, in the path of perfection. We should  
“ cherish all devotions, but attach ourselves preferably to that,  
“ which teaches us to love God, with our whole hearts, and our  
“ neighbour as ourselves. To obtain this devotion, we must  
“ strive to walk in God’s presence, retaining the remembrance  
“ of His benefits, and embracing every occasion, wherein we  
“ may render service to others, avoiding at the same time, all  
“ familiar and useless conversations.

“ Human prudence, is ever willing to embrace exterior de-  
“ votion, when there is question of contenting self-love ; pious  
“ books are read, but as it is more from curiosity than piety,  
“ no fruit is derived. Beads, medals, crosses and other  
“ exterior marks of devotion are eagerly sought after, and as they  
“ cost nothing to self-love, it is more through pride and osten-  
“ tation, than through a spirit of religion. Human prudence  
“ owns the necessity of loving our neighbour, still, it would  
“ not do, to put self-love under restraint, to oblige or render  
“ service.

“ It protests, that it is too prudent, to offend God in certain  
“ encounters, but alas ! the neighbour’s reputation is often  
“ times at stake, and a thousand fatal and dangerous opinions  
“ are the result of its temerity.

“ Divine wisdom is never disturbed, by the actions of others,  
“ when their faults cannot be prudently excused ; it supposes  
“ that some good intention led to the performance of these  
“ actions, and for this reason every effort is made, to mortify  
“ the eyes, the humor and the passions, and to feel contented,

“ when despised and deprived of human consolation. Human  
“ prudence meddles with every thing ; and being naturally  
“ indiscreet, is constantly in fault ; loves to give advice, but  
“ will not consent to be advised by any one, must know the  
“ whys and wherefores of every command, and obeys only,  
“ when it suits the inclination. Divine wisdom, under-  
“ stands the life and the actions of the Blessed Virgin,  
“ while on earth, and endeavors to imitate this divine model  
“ as perfectly as possible, is strictly exact in the observance of  
“ the rule, will leave the stitch without drawing the needle,  
“ and follows blindly the advice of Directors and Superiors. X

It was thus, that Sister Bourgeoys acted herself, thus she taught others. Then calling to mind the assurances that had been given her, relying upon the soul felt convictions, that God had chosen her, that Mary her Blessed Mother, had loved, watched over and conducted her, confidence in these celestial Protectors strengthened and animated her with new hopes and fresh love. She cast herself in spirit, before the throne of the Most High, and prayed aloud for her cherished Congregation. She prayed, not so much for the wants of the moment, she saw and knew all, but for its future, its future to her, yet unrevealed, she feared and prayed with a Mother's intuitive love. Then addressing herself to her heavenly Protectress, she asks ; “ O my  
“ good Mother, I ask for our community, no goods, no honors,  
“ no pleasures for this life ; obtain for us only, that God may  
“ be faithfully served, loved and obeyed, that His holy will be  
“ accomplished by each and all. Do not permit, that we  
“ should ever receive in our midst, haughty or presumptuous  
“ persons, nor those, whose hearts are fixed upon the things of  
“ this world, nor those who are slanderers or scoffers, nor any,  
“ save such, who will study and practice the maxims, which  
“ thy Son Our Lord has taught us, which He sealed with His  
“ blood, and which thou, O most holy Virgin, didst observe  
“ with so much exactitude. O most holy Mother, let me say  
“ that prayer, which the prophet Moses made to God, for the  
“ preservation of the Hebrew people. O Lord, let not one be  
“ lost, else, our enemy will say, that thou didst bring us into

“ the desert, that we might be led astray. I do not merit thy  
“ gracious assistance, for I confess, that in the whole course of  
“ my life, I have never performed a single meritorious act ; if  
“ you deign, O Our Mother, to pray for this family, over which  
“ I preside so unworthily, I know that your prayers will be  
“ heard. Do then for your poor children of the Congregation,  
“ what you have already so often done, for the weak and  
“ needy. I ask that one day, we may all be ranked, among  
“ the elect of God.

“ O Almighty and Eternal Father ! prostrate in the presence  
“ of thy Divine Majesty, I acknowledge my many miseries, and  
“ confess that I am the vilest of creatures. I dare, withal,  
“ address my humble prayer, confiding in the merits of that  
“ Precious Blood, shed for the redemption of all. I am willing  
“ and ready to suffer everything, to sacrifice my very life, in  
“ defence of those truths and commandments, which Thou hast  
“ given, to guide us in the path of virtue.

“ The remembrance of the manifold blessings, which Thy  
“ merciful hand has showered, upon each of my days, tells me,  
“ that my gratitude must be eternal. O ! if I am so happy as  
“ to be saved, and to live one day in the company of the  
“ Blessed, how ardently I will pray for this community, which  
“ Thou hast given me ; I shall not ask for honors, nor for tem-  
“ poral goods, but rather, that Thy holy will may be the life  
“ and motive, of every act therein performed.”

And when my prayers are pure and strong,  
As they in Heaven, will surely be,  
Amid a blessed angelic throng,  
Before His throne, I'll pray for thee.

Is there not something beautiful, in these prayers of the  
venerable foundress, for her Congregation ? In their motherly  
promptings, in their anxious tenderness ; that all may attain  
the end of their sublime calling ? How earnestly, she prayed  
that all those who came after her, might be imbued with that  
primitive spirit, which she bequeathed to her children, at so  
dear a price : spirit of zeal and disinterestedness, which rend-  
ered specially dear to God, her institution.

"I pray not for the world, but for them whom Thou hast given me, because they are thine." (St. John, chap. xi.) These beautiful words of Scripture are exemplified in Sister Bourgeoys' prayer : "I pray that all those who dwell therein, as well as those who are to come in future ; those, too, who contribute in any way to our spiritual advancement, may all be numbered among the elect. My demand is just, and if I am not heard, it is because I know not how to ask. O deign to hear my prayer ! I ask by the love Thou didst bear mankind, by the love which led Thee, O God, to sacrifice Thy Only Son, for our redemption. O holy Virgin ! I unite my prayers to that love of thine, which obtains so perfectly all, thou dost ask. Grant me thy assistance, o my good angel ; so that we may all one day, praise and bless the Author of our being."

Heaven could not refuse, to lend a willing ear to these outpourings of motherly affection and solicitude ; ah, no ! There was an intensity of desire that God might be known and loved, conspicuous in every act of Sister Bourgeoys' life ; a beautiful tinge of devotedness in everything, that she undertook for His glory. Two centuries have passed since then, and the lips that first uttered these prayers, repeat them now, as she once did promise, with the angelic choirs. They have become for her, a hymn of eternal love, praise and adoration.

Each new-born day can testify the efficacy of her solicitations, before the throne of God ; hundreds and hundreds have flocked since then, around her standard, and the virtue of that assurance : "Go, and I will never abandon thee," comes with its soothing balm of old, to give consolation and revive desponding hearts, as it did perchance, on that eventful morn, when a voice of more than angelic sweetness, calmed her fears, and gave strength and courage, for the far-off mission.

"Lo! the skies, their radiant portals open,  
And a tone,  
A tone angelic, bids her go."

"Go, and I will never abandon thee." Many a miracle attributed to the influence of this divine assertion, has been recorded



in the annals of each individual heart. Ah ! could they be made known, many a cheek would glow, and many an eye would flash, at the sight of victories won, upon that unseen battle field. Victories won in the hour of trial, temptation and danger ; when the heart like a bruised reed, waiting to be broken, was on the point of yielding all, when exhausted by its frequent struggles, it had no more hope, no more faith, no more love. No more faith in the promises, that had once consoled ; when all had almost gone, a faint echo suddenly resounded throughout memory's cells, " Go, and I will never abandon thee," and the storm ceased, as if by magic ; peace, love, hope and faith came back ; faith in the assurance, that a child of Mary and of Margaret Bourgeoys can never perish. " Go, and I will never abandon thee," has triumphed more than once, over the world, its pleasures, its deceitful joys. Over irresolute beings, who would fain lay their offering upon the altar, but who decoyed by the syren songs of life, turned to take a last look of objects they had loved, and were well nigh being lost ; had not the remembrance of these life giving words, snatched them from the world and from themselves, and thrust them, as if by force, into the haven of Margaret Bourgeoys' home. But nowhere is the blest influence of these words felt, as in the chamber of death ; there they fall, as falls the refreshing dew of Heaven, upon the parched petals of a rose ; they fall upon fair young beings, by God loved, called and won, that they might rest for aye in His eternal bosom. There can be no sweeter picture, than that of a dying nun, as she receives, in the last solemn hour, the promised hundredfold in all its plenitude ; as with a heart, hopeful and loving, a smile playing on her lips, she turns from earth to Heaven, her blessed Mother, and her venerable foundress by her side. We love to think that they preside invisibly, at that last sad hour. ✕

We know not what passes between the soul and God, when the senses are closed to all things earthly, it is true ; but may we not infer from the beauty of these death-bed scenes, that a voice, not of earth, has whispered, " Go, and I will never abandon thee ?"

Blissful emanations, from that first heavenly assurance given years before, how gently and how lovingly, they have fallen around our path; soft echoes from another world, they come to cheer us onward, through the difficulties and the dangers that, so often, beset our path, in the daily rounds of life; their magic tones have often been as music, to our troubled spirit.

## CHAPTER NINETEENTH.

Sister Bourgeoys' pious industries, to help her children onward in the path of true perfection.—Her ideas concerning perfection.—The rule of necessity and the rule of perfection.—The exterior and the interior rule.—Detached maxims concerning the spiritual life, written by Sister Bourgeoys and bequeathed to her children of the Congregation.—Duties of a Superior.—Sister Bourgeoys' devotedness to her institution.

To Sister Bourgeoys' motherly admonitions, so replete with piety and wisdom, we will add a few more details. In order to lead her daughters, to the perfection demanded by their special vocation, and to remove from them the baneful influence of routine, loneliness and disgust, to which the monotony of a regular uniform life, exposes at times the most fervent ; the pious foundress, had abundant means, for exciting their attention, and urging them onward in the path of virtue ; teaching them to purify their intentions, so as to persevere in the practices of the interior life. To keep alive within their hearts, the fire of strong desire, and preserve the spirit of grace and fervor ; she had established among them, Sister Bourgeoys, placed before them, the extent of their obligations in detail, and explained the varied duties of their state of life. According to her, there were two rules : the rule of strict necessity, and the rule of true perfection. Then again, there was what she called the exterior rule, sole guide of the imperfect religious, and the interior rule, which is scrupulously followed by all those, who have their spiritual advancement at heart.

"The rule," writes the pious Sister, "puts me in mind of a person, who has bought a piece of land at a very dear price ; to render it valuable, he has it prepared with great care, and every possible precaution taken, that it may bring forth abundant fruit. When comes the harvest time, instead of seeing to his grain, that it may be cut down and gathered in, he neglects it ; his land unprotected and without defence, is

“ open on all sides ; in consequence of this negligence,  
“ animals stray in amongst the grain, and cause such ra-  
“ vage, that his harvest is completely destroyed, and the land,  
“ bought at so dear a price, becomes useless. It is thus, with  
“ the rule of a religious house. If we do not live up to the  
“ obligations it imposes ; if we neglect or cast it aside, our  
“ passions and our evil inclinations, like so many wild beasts,  
“ enter into our hearts, destroy there, the seeds of virtue ; and  
“ in a short time, we are reduced to nothing.” She adds :  
“ These are two sorts of rules, the rule of necessity and the  
“ rule of perfection. The former is incumbent on all Christians,  
“ and consists in the observance of God’s commandments.  
“ We all know, that He must be loved, through a sense of  
“ duty, of justice and of necessity. He must be loved, above  
“ all things, and to Him alone is due adoration. This rule,  
“ which suffices at times, for the generality of christians, would  
“ never of itself be sufficient, to persons who are consecrated  
“ by a special calling, to His love and service ; - because, as  
“ they are favored with more abundant graces, their obligations  
“ towards God, are greater ; and through a motive of love and  
“ gratitude, they must aim at perfection. This rule of perfec-  
“ tion, consists in the perfect practice of the evangelical  
“ counsels, it teaches us to leave all, to take up our cross, and  
“ follow him.” He who would be my disciple, must take up  
“ his cross and follow me. (St. Matthew, chap. xvi). X

“ This rule of perfection, was first practised by Mary our  
“ heavenly mother, to its full extent, and during her entire life,  
“ she was a faithful copy of the virtues of her Divine Son.  
“ Throughout the church of God, those who are called to  
“ found and establish the different institutions therein, make it  
“ their duty, to imitate each in their way, some particular  
“ virtue of these divine models.

“ Our little community was established for the purpose of  
“ retracing the Blessed Virgin’s life, here below, and nothing  
“ must be neglected on our part, to attain so desirable an end.  
“ Ah ! will it not rejoice and gladden her motherly and vir-  
“ ginal heart, to see that her daughters, not only practice the

“rule of necessity, but at the same time, embrace with loving  
“savor, the rule of perfection? Let us then, make it an indis-  
“pensable duty to practice most perfectly, the duties and the  
“virtues of our vocation.” Then, entering into more minute  
details, considering this rule of perfection, Sister Bourgeoys  
remarks, that it may be examined under two different points  
of view : firstly, in its exterior, sensible part ; secondly, in that  
interior spirit, which is its life, and in which, its only real  
merit consists. “The exterior rule,” she says, “is made known  
“to us by the sound of the bell, and the voice of our Superior ;  
“but the interior rule, is marked by God’s interior voice, in  
“the depths of our heart. The first is good and necessary, but  
“of itself would never suffice ; the second is absolutely essen-  
“tial and alone gives merit to our actions. We rise for instance  
“at the first sound of the bell ; we should raise our hearts, still  
“more promptly towards God, and offer ourselves to Him, to  
“do His holy will. The exterior rule demands, that we dress  
“quickly and with modesty ; but the interior rule exacts that  
“we renounce all the vanities of the world, foresee our resolu-  
“tion for the ensuing day, and ward off the occasions, which  
“might prove pernicious to our souls. The bell rings for  
“prayer, but the voice of God whispers within our hearts, to  
“remind us how we should pray and walk, during the day, in  
“God’s presence.

“The bell summons us to the community-room, for the re-  
“citation of the *Veni Sancte*, which is the prelude to our daily  
“labors ; the interior rule, here purifies our intention, and  
“offers all to God, so that all our actions, even the most  
“trivial, may have its weight of merit. We obey the exterior  
“call to the chapel, for the exercise of self-examination ; the  
“heart must be, still more faithful, to the grace of God, which  
“exacts at this moment, close scrutiny upon our conduct,  
“since the morning meditation, that we reflect upon the reso-  
“lutions taken, and call to mind the efforts made, to put them  
“in practice. We are warned by the exterior rule, to meet in  
“the refectory for our meals, but the interior rule says : we  
“should eat with sobriety and in a spirit of mortification,

“taking without a murmur, whatever is placed before us, and  
“listening attentively to the lecture read during the repast, so  
“as to nourish our souls, at the same time, that we strengthen  
“our bodies. The exterior rule allows us to recreate our-  
“selves, but the interior rule admonishes us, not to do, or say  
“any thing, that might, in any way, cause disedification to  
“those around us. We should bear in mind, that our recrea-  
“tions, as well as our occupations, should be taken in God's  
“holy presence. Then, when comes the hour each day, for  
“the recitation of the Rosary, we should call to mind that it  
“is the most favorable moment, to show our gratitude to God,  
“for the numberless favors, He conferred upon the Blessed  
“Virgin ; and at the same time, with renewed sentiments of  
“respect and love, recognize her as our Mother, our Superior,  
“our Sovereign, our Ali, after her Divine Son. The spirit of  
“the interior rule, leads us to consider these moments as most  
“precious ; let us then be attentive to the beautiful prayer, we  
“are reciting, and have at all times, the unbounded confidence,  
“that she will assist us, in all our wants and necessities during  
“life, but principally at the hour of our death.”

The spirit of humility, which characterized Sister Bourgeoys' virtue, cannot be doubted. We have evidences of this, in the detached maxims, written by her upon the different subjects, that form the material work of the spiritual life. These simple details, read without reflection, may seem at first sight trifling, and even monotonous, to persons dwelling beyond the precincts of a religious house. The noise and bustle of the world, its passing joys, its anxieties and manifold cares, so absorb each hour of the day, that many persons piously inclined, forget, to render the performance of their actions agreeable to God ; they think not of animating them, with that spirit of faith, which gives merit to the most trivial act. These maxims, though laid down by the pious foundress, for those in particular, who were to continue her work, for those who aim at perfection, will nevertheless, prove useful to others ; their perusal, if nothing more, will be beneficial to many persons, living in the world, and who are called upon to take an active

part, in its varied scenes. We are to live, not as pagans and unbelievers, but according to the sublime prerogatives of our vocation ; as Christians, and members of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church ; as children of God, and heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven. Many of these maxims, if not all, will prove useful then, to those who have their salvation at heart. Sister Bourgeoys' instructions upon charity, are of untold value ; and if she teaches us to bear with each other's defects, to carry each other's burden, the great Apostle Saint Paul, taught the same lesson, long before, when he wrote to the Ephésians : " I beseech you brethren, that you walk worthy of the vocation, to which you are called. With all humility and mildness, with patience, supporting one another in charity. One body and one spirit ; as you are called in one hope of your calling." (*Ephésians, chap. IV, v. 1.2.3.*) And again : " Bear ye one another's burden, and so ye shall fulfil the law of Christ." .....

Charity is called the queen of virtues, but alas ! was ever sovereign more unheeded, was ever reign more inglorious ? Frequent the social reunions of the world, as they are called, and enumerate if possible, the sarcasms, the unkind insinuations, which fall from lips, upon which the Sacred Host perchance, has but lately deigned to rest. Many times perhaps, the Divine Master might rebuke, as He did of old, and say to these uncharitable hearts : " He that is without sin among you, let him, cast the first stone." We are so prone to see a straw in the eyes of our neighbour, and are unmindful of the beam, that is in our own ! We look at things, in a far different light, from the Saints who have gone before us. In writing these maxims, Sister Bourgeoys commences by a few observations respecting the rule ; she says : " The rule of a religious community, is raised up as a wall of defence, to protect the virtue of those, who dwell therein. The slightest breach, is profitable to our enemy, ever on the alert, to profit of a feeble side, and thus gain our treasure."



MUTUAL SUPPORT OR CHARITY.

"I should endeavor to persuade myself, that my faults and defects, are greater than those of others, and that they must struggle against their own feelings and inclinations, to bear with me. My defects may be displeasing to others, but they do me injury, because they offend God, and expose me to many spiritual dangers. I must then, bear patiently with others, in the same way, that Infinite patience supports me. In so doing, we will have no dread of the divine condemnation."

THE PROMISES WE HAVE MADE TO GOD.

"I remember that once, I possessed an object of certain value, which one of my young friends desired very much. I could not do otherwise than promise to give it to her, and such was my intention; but from one reason to another, I always deferred presenting my gift. Still more, I had the weakness, from time to time, to take off some ornament; that rendered it less acceptable, and finally, when I determined to accomplish my promise, my present was rejected, and thus I lost the friendship of a person, whom I had always esteemed. Do we not oftentimes act thus with regard to God? Do we not expose ourselves to be rejected by Him, because of so many promises made, that we never fulfil? because of so many offerings made, after the best part has been laid aside, for ourselves and our satisfactions."

FIDELITY TO SMALL THINGS.

"Ah! how much we can gain by these little acts, when they are performed purely for God's love! When a child, I used to make little presents to my father, but they were so trifling, so insignificant, that every one laughed at them, my father as well as others. However, as these little offerings were prompted by my childish love, he received them, and even

"took pleasure in showing them to his friends. It is thus with  
"our kind heavenly father. Contented, nay, even pleased,  
"with our most trivial actions, provided they are done for His  
"love. He even deigns to value them, in proportion to the  
"purity of that love which offers them ! Let then this senti-  
"ment of pure love, animate all our actions."

#### THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE.

"When we are greatly indebted towards any one, and  
"our debt exceeds our means, we are greatly hum-  
"bled, and show our good will towards satisfying our  
"creditors, by giving them all we have ; they, seeing  
"our good intentions, consent to wait patiently for the  
"remainder. In like manner, we must do our utmost to satisfy  
"God, to whom we are so immensely indebted. He will  
"accept our trifling payments, if He sees that they are accom-  
"panied, by a good will and firm purpose to pay Him all. To  
"liquidate this heavy debt, let us offer Him, all our daily trials  
"and contradictions ; an unkind word, received with patience  
"and christian forbearance, an act of condescension, practised  
"against our will, to refrain from looking at an object, that  
"gives us pleasure, to mortify our ears, in not listening to a  
"conversation, that has for us its own peculiar satisfaction, to  
"keep under restraint our thoughts and ideas, upon certain sub-  
"jects ; finally, to guard our senses for the love of God. All  
"these acts, so trivial in appearance, will assist us wonderfully,  
"to pay all we owe to divine justice. Let us regulate our  
"accounts with God, from time to time, by a sincere and hum-  
"ble confession ; and gathering together, our acts of virtues and  
"our firm resolutions, let us offer them to Him, to acquit a  
"portion of our debt, and to obtain time, mercy and indulgence,  
"to accomplish the entire payment."

#### ON DEATH.

"I should often call to mind, the thought of death, and  
"dwell upon the severe judgment that follows it. If we live

"in such a manner, as to obey with readiness this last summons, we will not fear that awful moment, and the terrors of death will be lost, in a firm unbounded confidence in God's infinite mercy."

#### UPON EATING AND DRINKING.

"The fear of losing our health, or some other feigned necessity is, oftentimes, a pretext for delicacy and daintiness, in the choice of our food, when in truth, our immortification and sensuality are the real cause. If we wish to imitate our heavenly Mother's life, we have great facilities for doing so, particularly on such occasions as these, when nature seeks to satisfy the inordinate desires of the appetite. To combat this inclination, let us content ourselves with the simplest food, and accept without murmur, whatever is placed before us. Ah ! if we only had a little more virtue, we would be eager to derive profit, from all our evil inclinations, by mortifying them and turning to God's glory, the little good there is in us. A Sister of the Congregation, is called by the spirit of her vocation, to lead a penitent and mortified life ; if instead of this, she satisfies her sensual appetites, she will be called upon, to give an exact account of all this self-seeking in the choice of her food, before the judgment seat of God.

#### THE SCHOOL ROOM.

"No occupation is more proper to draw down God's blessing and grace upon us, if it be performed with purity of intention, without distinction of poor or rich, relatives or friends, pretty or difformed ; but considering all with the eyes of faith, as so many drops of Our Lord's most precious blood. When correction is deemed necessary, it must be performed with prudence, modesty and moderation, through respect for God, at all times, present.

#### WORK, OR MANUAL LABOR.

"Shun idleness, above all things. We should always be oc-

“ cupied at something, with what obedience prescribes, accept-  
“ ing the different employments, without choice or murmur.  
“ Whatever we have to do, let it be done cheerfully. God  
“ loves the cheerful giver. Let us work in union with our  
“ heavenly Mother, and call to mind, in what manner she per-  
“ formed these same actions.

HARSH WORDS,—SARCASMS.

“ Is it not true, that we oftentimes take pleasure in listening  
“ to sarcastic expressions, raillery and other unkind remarks,  
“ that are made with wit and spirit? and perhaps they do not  
“ even reproach our consciences, sufficiently to make us  
“ accuse ourselves at confession. True, they may not be grie-  
“ vious sins, but at least they are stains, that tarnish the beauty  
“ of our souls, and that purity of heart which we should ever  
“ preserve, because of God's holy presence. These light, heed-  
“ less remarks, should be avoided, for they may pain the  
“ feelings of those around us, and diminish the good opinion,  
“ which others may entertain respecting them. Persons of this  
“ character, are extremely prejudicial to a religious house,  
“ and cause a great deal of injury, without perceiving it. We  
“ shall never begin to lead a spiritual life, so long as we cling  
“ to these imperfections. Let us banish them, far from our  
“ minds and from our hearts; let us not hear them, nor au-  
“ thorize by our silence, the slightest breach of charity, that  
“ may be made in our presence.

RESPECT IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.

“ The church is a holy place; wherein God listens to our  
“ prayers, provided they are conformable to the prescribed  
“ conditions. A contract; whose clauses and conditions are not  
“ respected, is worth nothing. We fail in the respect due to  
“ the house of God, when we hold unnecessary conversations  
“ there, when we sit or kneel in an unbecoming posture; when  
“ we are curious and distracted, gazing here and there, watch-

“ing those who come and go ; opening and closing the doors  
“violently. In a word, when we are forgetful of Him, in whose  
“presence we are.

#### UPON THE RECEPTION OF NOVICES.

“ It is evident, that if we make distinctions, between the  
“rich and poor, God's grace will not accompany us. The  
“Blessed Virgin, who was so enamored with holy poverty, will  
“teach us, that the more we seek earthly goods, the less we  
“shall enjoy them. Riches alone should never be a sufficient  
“motive, for receiving a young person into our Congregation.  
“When those who present themselves have, with poverty, a  
“good will and a true vocation, they are sufficiently rich and  
“bring God's grace with them, into the house.

#### ADMONITIONS AND REPRIMANDS.

“ A reprimand received in a spirit of true humility, is always  
“profitable to the soul ; and doubly so, when it is unme-  
“rited, for then it becomes a sacrifice most pleasing to God.  
“But alas ! we lose a great deal of merit, by our excuses and a  
“continual seeking to justify ourselves, and in wishing to know  
“the cause, the motive, by whom these reproaches were sug-  
“gested, and in consequence, rash judgments are formed,  
“revengeful desires are excited, and much ill-feeling testified.  
“To these charitable advances, prompted in our interest and  
“through love for us, we respond too often, by coldness and  
“ill-humor ; dispositions, alas, in which we indulge sometimes  
“too long, and thus instead of practising virtue, we become  
“really guilty in the sight of God.

#### THE PARLOR.

“ When called upon to receive a visit, we should always  
“commence by raising our hearts to God, and beg that we  
“may not offend Him in the slightest way, by our words or by

" our actions. We should avoid all lengthy discourses, useless inquiries, and keep to ourselves, the news we have heard there, unless charity or necessity compels us to make it known ; if so, confer with those, whose duty it is, to speak of these things to the community. Upon returning from the Parlor, we should reflect for a moment, and see if we have committed any fault ; we know what is to be done, on such occasions.

#### HOLY COMMUNION.

" When I reflect upon ' Holy Communion,' it seems to me, that we may be compared to so many pieces of coal, and that this Blessed Sacrament is the fire, which inflames us. If these coals are but superficially enkindled, if they are scattered here and there, the fire will not burn.

" Or, I should say, that when the effects of the Sacrament are not felt, after holy Communion, it is not unfrequently, because the coals are scattered, that is, we forget the greatness of the act we have just performed, and abandon ourselves to our natural inclinations, our ease and comfort, to frivolous and useless conversations ; in a word, because we are amused and preoccupied by a thousand trifles, instead of reflecting upon the greatness of the gift we have, so recently received, and the obligations it imposed upon us.

#### THE WORD OF GOD

" The word of God, is a divine seed, our hearts the ground wherein it is to be sown, by means of pious lectures and good instructions. To produce fruit, our hearts must be warmed by the grace of God, by Jesus Christ, who is the true Sun of justice. Our passions and evil inclinations, are the obstacles which prevent this Divine Sun from penetrating into our hearts. Some oppose to these heavenly rays, as it were, a high wall, so as to seclude the light and heat from penetrating within. Such are those, who refuse to read or

“to hear the word of God. Others, heed this divine word,  
“and reflect upon it too, betimes ; but, as a thousand earthly  
“thoughts attach them to the world, and to the things of the  
“world, it avails them but little.

“When once these obstructions are removed, from the  
“heart, and the seeds of heavenly inspirations, virtuous im-  
“pulses, and pious lectures, are freely exposed, to the benefi-  
“cent influences of this Sun of Justice. Ah, then ! flowers  
“and fruits are produced in abundance, and are meet offerings  
“to place on the Altar of the Most High.”

#### SICKNESS AND INFIRMITY.

“When we are well prepared, this is a time of special grace  
“and benediction ; it is the harvest time for eternity, because  
“it gives us the means of working for ourselves, or rather for  
“God, in keeping us in a state of resignation and perfect sub-  
“mission, to the Divine Will. It is a time of continual  
“sacrifice, on account of the pain, the mortification, and the  
“weariness, which are inseparable from this state. But it is  
“also a season of many dangers, as regards our spiritual wel-  
“fare ; and oftentimes, when the devil has exerted himself in  
“vain, to make us fall into his snares, in the time of health  
“and strength, he comes back and attacks with renewed  
“fury, because he hopes to vanquish our constancy, during  
“these moments of weakness. If he does not succeed entirely,  
“he will endeavor to make us fall into many imperfections, so  
“as to deprive us of the merit of our sufferings ; we fall into  
“the snares of the devil, when we have an inordinate  
“desire for the preservation of our health ; when we are  
“delicate and dainty in the choice of our food ; when we are  
“impatient and inconsistent, inclined to fret and murmur, on  
“account of the pain we endure. Let us endeavor to profit  
“of these marks of God's love, and avoid all singularity, that  
“our illness does not demand. Let us bear in mind, that the  
“more vigilant we have been during life, in mortifying our  
“natural vicious inclinations, the more vigorously, will the



“devil redouble his efforts, during our sickness, and especially  
“at the hour of our death; so determined is he, upon our  
“eternal loss.”

ON HUMILITY.

“It is highly advantageous to our souls, to reflect deeply  
“and frequently, on the wonderful privileges, conferred upon  
“our Blessed Lady, because of her great humility. It will  
“help us to know and to feel our manifold miseries. She,  
“elevated above all creatures, esteemed herself the vilest of  
“all. This will, perhaps, make us understand the depth of  
“our own unworthiness, of our pride and temerity, when we  
“prefer ourselves to others, either for wit, talent, pretended  
“virtue, or any other trifling advantage, either of the body or  
“of the mind. It almost always happens, that persons who  
“are puffed up with their own excellence, are humbled by  
“God, who punishes their pride thus. He has endowed each  
“of us with his own gifts, and not unfrequently, those who  
“seem the most favored, are the poorest and the most indigent  
“in the eyes of God. Let each one derive profit from the  
“advantages received, and remember that much will be re-  
“quired from those, to whom much has been given.”

It was in this manner that Sister Bourgeoys taught her spiritual daughters, to perform all their actions. She proposed these different rules to them, that they might discern more easily, the great opposition that exists, between the maxims of the world and the spirit of faith. To these counsels and admonitions, so charming in their simplicity, the pious Sister adds a few more details, relative to the duties of a Superior, who is obliged to procure the advancement of all those, who are under her charge, in the path of perfection.

“The Superior,” she writes, “should instruct the members  
“of her community, by her own examples, by general and par-  
“ticular instructions, but above all, by her fervent and conti-  
“nual prayers to God, in their behalf. Her great obligation is  
“to see, that the Sisters are formed to the practice of virtue;

"and that they walk steadily, in the paths of wisdom and perfection. It is her duty to make them understand, that the one thing necessary is to seek the divine pleasure. God, at all times ; God, in all things. Mildness and firmness should walk hand in hand, during her administration. Human respect, should never prevent her, from reprimanding or correcting those, who are negligent or indifferent in the service of God. She should observe with what perfection, each one practices her vows, and the different obligations of the religious state. If the Superior lives in peace and harmony with all, if her heart beats in unison with those of her Sisters, God will bless her, and accomplish wonderful things in her favor." Such was the perfection, which the pious foundress desired to see, vivifying each member of her community ; and these extracts, taken from her spiritual maxims, prove the purity of her motives, in the establishment of her Congregation ; and the spirit of faith and discernment in the choice of those, who were to continue her work. These last instructions to her Sisters, a short time before her death, were as a dying legacy to her religious family, for whose welfare she had toiled, and for whom she was now, about to give up her precious life. How ardently she prayed, that not one of those destined, to carry out her work in full, should be lost. Language is inadequate to express the time-tested devotedness of Margaret Bourgeoys, to her Congregation, when in unison with the Queen of Virgins, she inspired her children how to act, gave them the strongest evidences, that the difficulties under which they so often labored, were to be in their own mysterious ways, manifestations of God's love towards her community. Thus it has always proved.

Betimes, when the heart saddens at the sight of impending clouds, a ray of light will come through the darkness, and the soul will feel the potent charm, that brings back hope and courage. There is no place for discouragement, in the heart of a true Sister of the Congregation ; Margaret Bourgeoys' prayers were ratified long ago, so that she desired for her community in her day, she obtained, and her desires realized at the redeem-

ing price of prayer, sacrifice and humiliation, have been for two centuries and more, the consolation and the pride of those, who are too happy, to call themselves her children. The Congregation of Notre Dame, was to form a distinct feature in the church of Ville-Marie, and despite men and circumstances, its primitive spirit will be preserved, it cannot be otherwise. He, who would not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed, will He thrust from his loving heart, the outstretched imploring arms of Margaret Bourgeoys, as she prays for her children of the Congregation, and recalls the forty-seven years of toil, poverty, sacrifice and humiliation, endured for His love in the wilds of Canada? He will not, He cannot. Has he not pledged His eternal word?

## CHAPTER TWENTIETH.

The "Holy Saturday of human life.—Kind Heaven listens to the prayers of Sister Bourgeoys' children.—The last hours of 1699.—Sister Catherine of the Angels.—The crowning act of Sister Bourgeoys' life.—Her last illness.—Instructions given to the members of her Congregation.—The supreme moment.—Sister Catherine is restored to life.—Mr. LeBer paints the portrait of the pious foundress.

We have almost finished, dear reader, and the incomparable woman, whose virtues have occupied us until now, has finished too, almost finished her earthly career. She has reached that period of her existence, which Madam Swetchine calls, "The Holy Saturday of human life."

This beautiful thought, gives a new impulse to our own feelings, and as we gaze upon a retrospect, rendered so sweetly familiar, by the ever reverting scenes of heroism, devotedness and zealous love, we feel that she has indeed acquired a strong and undeniable claim, to a bright and glorious resurrection. Her Easter is not far distant. Shadows, may no longer content her. God, God alone is the sole object of her craving desires.

"For Thy rest, my spirit yearns,  
Oh! 'tis hard to wait,  
Mindful of the lamp that burns,  
Beyond the golden gate."

Margaret Bourgeoys' whole life, had been one uninterrupted act of love; even from her most tender years, her thoughts and her affections, tended upwards; and later, when the golden dreams of childhood, were lost amid the stern realities of life, when her love had grown strong, beneath the pressure of years and of sacrifices, and had almost burst the heart's capacities, there was an inexpressible depth of tenderness, in her longings for eternal life. About a year before her death, she fell dangerously ill, more than half a century of fatigue and austerity, had done its utmost upon her feeble frame; those who had

grown up around her, and who called her Mother, felt their hearts sink within them, lest she should be taken away. Venerable eye-witnesses of her daily heroisms, they feared, lest the angel of death, should snap asunder, the silver cords of life. They watched and hoped, and prayed, that she might be spared. Heaven listened to their supplications ; symptoms of disease vanished, and the "child of eternity came back to earth," sacrificing for yet a while, her royal dwelling place. It was a bitter disappointment, to feel herself so near to Heaven, that she could almost hear the angelic choirs, then come back a fugitive to earth ; to feel herself so near home, then retrace the exile's path. Alas ! how different are our thoughts ! How different are our hearts ! How we love this earthly home, how we cling to these tenements of clay, heedless of that better land, whose beauties, whose joys, no tongue may tell. Is it not the great Apostle that says : " Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man, to conceive the glories of that eternal home ! " Alas ! that we should so loiter on the road to Heaven, that we should linger by the way, like wanton youth, to pluck a flower that fades so soon, and chase the dazling butterfly, that ever eludes our grasp. How we forget our final departure from the land of exile, and still, this hour will come for all. It is written, " That every man shall go into the house of his eternity, and as you shall be found in that last hour, worthy of love or of hatred, such shall you be forever," and again, " By their fruits shall they be known." There can be no repentance after death. Margaret Bourgeoys knew this, how much she had to offer her God : prayers, sacrifices and penitential tears, with her unstained baptismal robe, preserved in all its unblemished whiteness, for the space of eighty years. She might well desire to die, and almost shed bitter tears, to think her exile was prolonged. She came back, angels had whispered :

" He will love Thee better still,  
If Thou doest His holy will."

And when the Sisters came around her, and expressed their

joy, to see her once more well, she chided them smilingly for this act of filial love: "By their prayers, they brought me back," she would say, "brought me back, when I was almost there." We can easily imagine, what treasures of merit, sealed each successive day, and how her love for God increased, as the last hours, of her pilgrimage, drew nigh. When the sun is setting, do not his farewell rays bathe earth, sea and sky, in a shower of golden light? It was thus with Margaret Bourgeoys, she cast a halo of sanctity all around her, and as her fond daughters, gazed upon that face so calm, so holy and so subdued, they fancied a light from Heaven stole through the dark, piercing orbs, and words of milk and honey flowed from her lips, as though she had caught the tone from angels. Had Heaven made known to her, that she was going, going, really going home? We know not, but towards the end of the year, her joy became unutterable. She had lived for God alone, His love had been her daily, hourly food; and now, her last earthly act, like unto that of her Divine Master, is an act of perfect charity, an act of heroic love. "Greater than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friend." (St. John, chap. xv.)

It was the last hour of the old year. Sister Bourgeoys in apparently good health, had retired to rest, with the community. All was silent and in darkness, save in the convent chapel, where a glimmering light burned before the Blessed Sacrament, while one other, shed its pale lustre, around Sister Catherine's sick-bed, in the infirmary. This good Sister, had been for some time past, seriously ill; she had even received the last rites of the Church. Those who watched at her bed side remarked, that with her disturbed slumbers, came a sudden change upon her countenance, and then they knew, that her agony was coming on. Consternation reigned for a moment, within the convent walls. Sister Catherine, still in the prime of life, was mistress of the novices, much beloved, and humanly speaking, necessary to her community; so Sister Bourgeoys thought. She grew worse; hurried feet, carried the doleful news, from corridor to corridor, to summon the

Sisters, to the prayers for the dying. Sister Bourgeoys caught the echo, and groaned aloud : " O my God ! why not take me, the old and useless, and spare this poor Sister, who can yet " serve Thee long."

Angels heard the loving strain,  
And bore on high, the sweet refrain.

Christianity can boast of her children's heroic deeds, and point with pride, to many a noble record, and she will ever love to place with her most glorious and her most renowned, the holocaust, that Margaret Bourgeoys laid upon her Altar. She will tell the tale to future generations, how this heroine of the eighteenth century, beautified her annals, and rendered glorious her cause in this youthful land, our western home.

The victim was offered, the sacrifice accepted ; from this moment Sister Catherine grew better, and was soon entirely out of danger, while Sister Bourgeoys, on this first day of the new year, fell at once dangerously ill, of a malignant fever, accompanied by the most excruciating pains, which gave her no rest, for the twelve remaining days of her life. In the midst of her intense sufferings, neither murmur, nor complaint escaped her lips. Ever calm and resigned, she received without a reply, the bitter potions and violent applications, prescribed by her physician ; though she knew well, that they would not relieve her, but on the contrary, only serve to increase her pain. To suffer, this was her aim in accepting these different treatments, and when her poor frame, racked with pain, rendered her an object of pity, to those around her, she would still seek to increase her sufferings, by taking some uncomfortable posture, or else by a voluntary privation. The infirmarian, perceiving her ingenuity, to practice acts of mortification, even upon her death bed, gave a gentle reprimand to her holy patient, and then, the wilful penance gave place to a sweet child-like obedience. Does not this intense love of suffering, recall the seraphic Theresa, whose constant prayer was : " To suffer, or to die ? " It was a pleasure to enter her sick room, where a sweet beautiful calm, a holy joy, shed their mild radiance ; and



then, her hymns of loving praise to God, how melodiously they resounded throughout those silent apartments ! When the atrocious pang came on, she would burst into extatic transports of joy and love for God ; now longing aspirations, to be reunited to her Beloved ; again, an act of submission to his holy will, which always finished by a song of praise. When nature was too much exhausted by these fervent acts, she would suggest the most beautiful hymns, she knew, to her sisters, and beg them to sing for her, so as to keep alive within her breast, inflamed desires of Heaven, and the fond hope that she might soon be there. Her tender solicitude for her Congregation, inspired her many wise recommendations for its future, for its spiritual and temporal welfare. She entered into the most minute details, concerning its greater good, told the sisters in what manner they were to act, in reconstructing their house upon a more extensive plan ; she made certain observations, respecting the different apartments, destined for the use of the Sister-hood, improvements and essential arrangements, for the comfort and good order of the boarding-school and external classes. Nothing was left undone. Still, in the possession of her intellectual faculties, she taught to others, the lessons which a life long experience had rendered familiar to her, for the greater good of her community, and the spiritual welfare of each of its members. But no example, no lesson, was more productive of good, than the sight of the venerable foundress, during her twelve days illness.

She was an object of admiration to Heaven and to earth, Angels praised God on high, because of the virtues that adorned her soul, and those around her, gazed in wonder, and blessed God in their hearts, for the magnanimous acts of mortification, obedience, and submission to the will of Heaven, which shed so much lustre around her dying bed. It was the echo of a virtuous life. No tongue can tell her ardent desires to be reunited to her God. Loving aspirations, burst from her heart and from her lips, for now, her hour had come. Blest spirits, from their pure abode on high, came to assist at her dying moments. Saints too came, to escort their Sister Saint

to realms of endless bliss. Jesus, the spouse of virgins, their love and their eternal recompense, came too, to give her for the last time, a foretaste of heavenly joys.

It was her last hour on earth. Heaven was already in her heart, its joys and consolations all around her. She glanced upon her stricken family, it was a look of melting tenderness, a recapitulation of all she had ever told them, of all she had ever done for them. It was her last. Crossing her hands upon her breast, she fell into a gentle agony, which lasted for about three hours; then, as the clock struck three, she resigned her pure soul into the hands of its Maker, and entered the land of immortality, the 12th day of January, in the year 1700. It was the eightieth of her earthly pilgrimage, forty seven of which, had been entirely sacrificed, for the salvation of souls, in the city of Ville-Marie. "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I have finished the work, Thou gavest me to do." (St. John, chap. xvii.)

By the bright stream, now thy lot is cast,  
Joy for thee, happy one, thy bark hath past,  
The rough sea's foam.

Now, the long yearnings of thy soul are stilled,  
Home! home, thy peace is won, thy heart is filled,  
Thou art gone home.

(HEMANS)

Gone home, and received her eternal welcome. "Come ye  
"blessed of my Father, enter into the kingdom, which hath  
"been prepared for you, from the foundation of the world."  
"For I was hungry, and you gave me to eat: I was thirsty,  
"and you gave me to drink: I was a stranger, and you took  
"me in. Amen, I say unto you, so long as you did this, to  
"one of these, the least of my brethren, you did it to me."  
(St. Matthew, chap. xxv.)

Come, it is love's salutation! Come, and possess the kingdom prepared for you! Come, and partake of the perennial banquet, of the heavenly Jerusalem!

Come, these who taste those crystal floods,  
Shall faint with thirst no more.

We have followed the immortal soul, as it winged its flight on high, and listened to the thrilling sounds of "welcome," which resounded throughout the heavenly courts, as it drew nigh. Let us come back to earth, back to the bereaved children, who are still kneeling and weeping, around the lifeless form, weeping with love and joy ; for joy will, oftentimes, cause our tears to flow. A light from Heaven has suddenly lit up the pale wan features. A ray from the crown of glory, has strayed way down to earth. It is an incontestable fact, that almost as soon as Sister Bourgeoys had breathed her last, her face, which was considerably altered, by the excessive sufferings of her last illness, as well as by the incessant austerities inflicted upon her body, became suddenly suffused, with a light so radiant, that it was taken for a shadow of the eternal splendors, in which her soul now revelled.

" Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

He who pronounced these soothing words, tarried not with his consolations. The smile, the features, of the deceased so gloriously tinged with immortality, penetrated the inmost souls of her children and animated them with a vehement desire, to walk courageously in her footsteps.

It was on this occasion, that Sister Catherine, now perfectly restored to health, through a sentiment of esteem and grateful veneration, for her benefactress, changed her religious name of the Angels, to that of the Blessed Sacrament, the one by which Sister Bourgeoys was designated in her community. Tradition tells us, that while the Sisters were still gazing upon the celestial beauty of their dear departed ; they expressed the legitimate desire, to have her features preserved for the consolation of her children, a family legacy that might be bequeathed to future generations. Mr. Peter LeBer, brother of the celebrated recluse Jane LeBer, had a certain knowledge of the art of painting. He had ever evinced a sincere interest, a deep attachment, for the worthy foundress and for her Congregation. To him then, the Sisters had recourse, that this earnest desire of all, might be realized. He consented most willingly, and promised to do his utmost, preparing himself in the meantime,

in a worthy and christian manner, so that God might bless his endeavors ; he received holy communion that morning, in the convent chapel.

His devotion satisfied, Mr. LeBer set to work. Heaven manifested its approval of his pious sentiments, by the bestowal of a favor, which strengthened his good will, and attested Sister Bourgeoys' credit, before the throne of God. Hardly was Mr. LeBer seated before his easel, when he was seized with so violent a headache, that it was impossible for him to continue. At this moment, he was inspired to place a lock of Sister Bourgeoys' hair, upon his head, and almost instantaneously, he was relieved. It is needless to say, how gratefully he resumed his labor. The portrait was finished, and surpassed the most sanguine expectations. The sisters were supremely happy in the possession of so rich a treasure, the beloved features of their sainted mother. Again, they could behold the kind approving smile, that ever spurred them on, to deeds of godliness, and the uplifted finger would point out, as heretofore, that path of duty, from which she had never swerved, and in which she prayed so fervently, that all her future children might walk.

The tolling of the convent bell, soon attracted a saddened throng to the Congregation. The entire city of Ville-Marie was astir, and it seemed as if every family had lost its dearest member. Heaven had won a saint, but the youthful city had lost her noblest heroine, her most devoted benefactress. Many of the sturdy pioneers, who had sacrificed their country and their homes, to colonize the forest shores of Hochelaga, had gone to their eternal rest ; but their children had grown up with the city of Ville-Marie, and they came to pay their tribute of respect and gratitude, to the memory of the high-minded woman, who had been to their fathers, a guide, a mother, a solace and a friend. This was evident, from the crowds of every condition, who came from the city and country places, to kneel and pray beside her inanimate form. The body of the regretted foundress was covered with medals, pictures, prayer-beads, and similar objects of devotion. Every one

wished to take away something, that had belonged to the kind unobtrusive Sister.

When the hour destined for the last sad ceremony drew near, a pious contestation arose, between the sisters of the Congregation, and the gentlemen of Saint-Sulpice ; each laid claim to the pious deposit. The sisters quite naturally desired that the remains of their cherished foundress, should be interred in their midst ; but the Parish of Notre Dame forgot not, on this occasion, the weight of Sister Bourgeoys' examples during life. She came for the colony of Ville-Marie, she had sacrificed a long career of forty-seven years, in its welfare ; to the colony, therefore, she belonged, as a public treasure. Mr. Dollier de Casson, Vicar-General of the Diocese, and at the same time, the worthy Superior of Saint-Sulpice, decided that the heart of the illustrious dead, should remain with her religious family, and her body interred in the Parish Church of Notre Dame, to the greater glory of God, and the advantage of Ville-Marie, whose citizens would love to press, around the tomb of their benefactress, of their protectress. Consequently, the last sad rites for the deceased, were performed at Notre Dame. Sanctuary, where she had so often prayed, for her children, and for her country's weal. Never, had Ville-Marie, been the theatre of a more imposing spectacle. It was not so much the multitudes that thronged around her bier, as the displayal of those lofty sentiments, which spring from appreciative and grateful hearts ; the high-born and the lowly, the learned and the ignorant, all vied with each other in respect and veneration for the departed. Ecclesiastics, distinguished for their piety and their science, the Chevalier de Callière, Governor-General of Canada, de Vaudreuil, Governor of Ville-Marie, and numerous other persons of merit and distinction, mingled with the silent throng, within the precincts of Notre Dame, at this last sad moment. Important duties, daily occupations, satisfactions of every kind were laid aside ; there was but one imperious duty to be performed at this moment, it was a common impulse, to gather around Margaret Bourgeoys' remains, and accompany them, to their final dwelling place. Mr. Dollier de Casson, a saintly octoge-

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narian, whose relations with the venerable Sister, had been so long and so intimate, he who knew her so well, and who had ever looked upon her, as the most precious gift, God had bestowed upon Canada, ascended the pulpit. Words of praise and admiration flowed from his lips, as he extolled the eminent virtues and rare qualities, with which God had endowed the venerable foundress ; words of praise, that would have caused the humble Sister, to shudder, had her ears been open to earthly sounds. Then turning to the Sisters of the Congregation, he implored each one, to reproduce in her life, the admirable virtues of her, whom they called their Mother. His trembling voice, seemed to have recovered its youthful vigor, on this occasion. Mr. René de Breslay of Saint-Sulpice, performed the last ceremony, and gave to Sister Bourgeoys, that last of all earthly gifts, a grave. The last, and yet not the last. Is there aught on earth more beautiful or more consoling, than those last prayers for the dead ? With what tenderness, our holy Mother the Church, accompanies her children to their final resting place. Solicitude and reverence for the dead, is one of her most beautiful features ; when those beyond her pale, consign the remains of those they love, to the silent tomb, there is a coldness and a sadness about their last rites, that speak of indifference, and leave painful impressions within the heart. No wonder, that they are so soon forgotten ; for them, there is no *Memento* during the Holy Sacrifice, no month's mind, no anniversary, no prayers, no pleadings, that their sufferings may cease. None.

I hear the tolling of the bell,  
'Tis the Requiem's solemn tone.  
The last dear boon, that friends may give,  
When death has left them, sad and lone.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST.

Tribute of public esteem and veneration, paid to the remains of Sister Bourgeoys.—Her heart is embalmed and placed in a shrine, at the Congregation.—The month's mind.—Extract from the Eulogium pronounced by Mr. de Belmont, of Saint Sulpice.—Letters of condolence, written to the Sisters of the Congregation, by many distinguished persons, both in France and Canada.—Words of sympathy from Troyes.—Sister LeBer, the recluse of Ville-Marie.

A distinguished clergyman, of Ville-Marie, writing to one of his friends in France, alludes to the touching incidents connected with Sister Bourgeoys' death. He says : "Never before, did Ville-Marie behold so many remarkable persons, united together, as those who assembled this morning, to assist at Sister Bourgeoys' obsequies. There was an extraordinary concourse, from every rank of society ; and if Saints were canonized now, as in the olden time, most assuredly, we would say mass, to-morrow, in honor of Saint Margaret of Canada." Truly hath it been said : "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Mr. Dollier de Casson, Superior of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice, placed a brass plate, with the following inscription, upon Sister Bourgeoys' coffin :

*Here lies the Venerable SISTER MARGARET BOURGEOYS, Foundress and first Superior, of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, established in Montreal, and devoted to the instruction of young girls. Deceased the 12th day of January, A. D. 1700. Pray for the repose of her soul.*

Her heart, which had been carefully embalmed, was enclosed within a leaden box, and transferred to the apartment where the Sisters assembled each day, to attend to their pious exercises, and offer up their prayers to God. This humble shrine, was visited again and again, during the entire month,



that followed the pious Sister's death. It would seem as if the entire population, had been attracted by some mysterious charm, to a spot, so fraught with hallowed recollections, as if they awaited there, some token, some message, from the heavenly home above. The hour had not yet come. During this time, the same devotion, that had led the faithful, to kneel and pray around her mortal remains, led them again, to pray with devotion, before the shrine which contained her heart; her heart, which had been for so long a period, an altar, whereupon she had laid, whole burnt offerings, and living sacrifices, in honor of the Most High. The smallest particle of linen, which had imbibed her blood, was coveted as a precious relic.

Finally, when came the month's mind, the 11th of February, a solemn requiem mass was sung in the chapel of the Congregation. A multitude, both clergy and laity, came again from all parts, to assist at this second funeral service, and proved thereby, the sincerity of their esteem and veneration for the dead. The ceremony of enshrining her heart, within the convent walls, was both religious and affecting; for where, can a heart be more honored and more beloved, than with its own. The precious object, covered with a white veil, was placed in front of the sanctuary, until after the 'Holy Sacrifice;' then, when the ordinary prayers of the dead were over, Mr. de Belmont taking in his hands, the box which contained Margaret Bourgeoys' magnanimous heart, and preceded by the clergy, bore it to the spot, destined for its reception. A plate of lead, another of brass, closed the *niche*.

A second Eulogium, was pronounced by Mr. de Belmont, who feared not to represent Sister Bourgeoys, as already triumphing in the Courts of Heaven, and praying from her bright throne, for the institution she had founded. It will not be amiss, dear reader, to give a few extracts here:

"Be ye followers of me, as I also am of Jesus-Christ."  
(1st Epistle, Corinthians.)

"If the Church has ordained prayers and sacrifices, for the

"dead, a month after their demise, it is not that she wishes to  
"renew the grief of those that mourn, in recalling their recent  
"loss, and the memory of the loved ones gone. She wishes  
"not to inflict new wounds, nor cause bitter tears to flow  
"anew. On the contrary, she would banish every trace of  
"sorrow, and turn their thoughts to an hour of reunion, in a  
"land of glorious immortality. She invites nature to yield to  
"grace, so that all these painful emotions, be lost in a peace-  
"ful remembrance; a remembrance replet with esteem and  
"gratitude, which may lead them, to imitate the virtues of those  
"they mourn.

"My dear Sisters, you have rendered to your dear and il-  
"lustrious dead, all those duties, that piety and gratitude  
"could suggest; you have performed these duties, in a manner  
"worthy of her, and worthy of yourselves, and if filial love,  
"for the loss of such a mother, has caused your tears to flow,  
"Saint Augustin will plead your cause, for he confesses, that  
"he wept bitterly, on the tomb of his sainted Mother Monica.  
"But, suffer me to say, that you have grieved too much for  
"her, and sufficiently for yourselves. Enough has been given,  
"to tears and to sorrow. Your venerable mother, is not dead  
"to you for, if the cessation of so beautiful a life gives you  
"pain, it is in your power, to reproduce this life, in your own  
"conduct, by the exact imitation of those virtues, which shone  
"so conspicuously in her. If the hand of death has snatched  
"her from your sight, love, whose characteristic is to resemble  
"the object loved, will engrave her likeness upon your hearts,  
"and in your acts, and thus, she will live again in you, her  
"children.

.....  
"God willed that her pure body should return to earth,  
"ashes to ashes, dust to dust,' but her heart, sanctuary of  
"every virtue, He willed, should remain with you. ....

"Her heart now supplies, the place of her body. In truth  
"she was never so really with you. She was never more really  
"your Mother and Superior than now, and that, through inte-  
"rest and inclination. It is her interest, because you are des-

"tined to increase her glory ; you are her treasure, source of  
"all her merit. She is with you still, for it is written. "Where  
", thy treasure is, there, thy heart is also." She remains with  
"you, through inclination. The bliss she now enjoys, can only  
"increase her maternal love. She knows you better now, and  
"will watch over you more tenderly, assist you more power-  
"fully, than ever ; and when I consider her thus, I represent  
"to myself the eagle, spoken of in Scripture, ' that was always  
"seen hovering over its nest, spreading out its wings, calling  
"its young and teaching them, how to fly towards the elevated  
"regions of air.' It will be thus, with Sister Bourgeoys' heart,  
"which we have placed in your midst. It will throb in union  
"with yours at the hour of prayer ; it will preside over your  
"reunions and rekindle your devotion. Oh ! may this heart, so  
"conformable to the Saviour's loving heart, be ever the model  
"of yours. Now, that vanity may not be feared, she will repeat  
"to you these words of the Apostle, these words that her hu-  
"mility would not have suffered, during her mortal life. ' Be  
"ye followers of me, as I was of Jesus Christ.' Souls, specially  
"chosen by God to accomplish his great designs, are generally  
"those, who bear the strongest marks of resemblance to the  
"divine original. And among these, we dare place this great  
"servant of God. Through a spirit of humility and abjection,  
"she fled from the world and from all things, pertaining to the  
"world. Her humility led her to conceal the special favors,  
"she received from Heaven ; favors, which we know, consoled  
"her, in the midst of trials and contradictions, although her  
"lips would never make the avowal ; and for this reason, I  
"would rather bring back to your minds, those virtues of which  
"you were the daily witnesses, rather than relate in detail, the  
"acts of heroism she practiced. Ah ! Sisters, love to recall the  
"memory of those days, of those nights, spent by her, in  
"almost one continued prayer ; bring back the precious mo-  
"ments of Communion, when, preparing to receive her heavenly  
"Spouse, her eyes bathed in tears, her mouth perfumed with  
"loving sighs, it seem to those who beheld her, that her  
"heart all inflamed, came forth to meet the Beloved of her

“soul. You have seen her in moments, such as these, as she knelt before the Altar, a living act of extatic love.

“All these things you know, but of the interior favors received, of the secret communications held, between her soul and God, no man may speak.

“Mysteries of burning love, never to be understood by us.

.....  
“The principle fruit of her union with Jesus Christ, was a participation of His love for crosses and sufferings, His zeal for souls, His strength or courage. When I speak of her love of the Cross, I mean at the same time, her love of poverty, her love of sufferings, her love of humiliations. Three distinct parts of the cross. Humility, the base ; poverty and sufferings, the arms. Do you not remember, how she vowed body and soul to holy poverty ? with what persevering fidelity, she abstained from the most essential necessities of life ? Did she not content herself with the poorest and the vilest of every thing ? Ah ! we may not speak of that prodigious abstinence, that spirit of mortification, which led her to fare, almost continually, upon the leavings of others. Who has not heard of her disinterested spirit, of her universal detachment. Recall for instance, the trials she bore when God, wishing to purify still more, her precious soul, treated her, as he once treated the holy man Job. When He took away, all that He had given, destroyed in a few hours, the fruit of her twenty years labor, and called to Himself, through the flames of a fearful conflagration, two excellent members of her community, one of whom was her own niece ; victims, that she offered upon the Altar of sacrifice, when she praised God, by her heroic resignation. Shall we endeavor to recount the trials endured, throughout her long painful existence ? Bodily sufferings, heroically borne ; interior trials, supported with perfect cheerfulness, perfect patience, with acts of humility, a thousand times more persuasive than words ? You, her children, you must follow her, in that path of humility, which her example has rendered so glorious and so easy. She walked before you, bearing her cross ; she placed you, her

" treasures, within the arms of the cross, that you might live  
" there. Attach yourselves, to the cross, with Jesus, and never  
" descend therefrom. Place your head, amid the thorns and  
" difficulties of every day life, expose your hearts to the lance  
" of contradictions, let your members adhere to the cross, by  
" obedience ; in a word. " Be ye followers of me, as I was of  
" Jesus Christ.

" The second trait of resemblance, to our Divine Lord, was  
" zeal, for the salvation of souls ; I will not speak of her youth-  
" ful beginnings, among the companions of her infancy, nor of  
" her tender vigilance over brothers and sisters, beneath the  
" paternal roof. I would come more directly, to what she  
" accomplished in this colony. Called through a miraculous  
" favor, to a life perfect and apostolic, she followed the call of  
" grace, with a generosity unsurpassed. She followed it, through  
" the perils and tempests of ocean ; aye, even to the red  
" man's western home, that she might conquer there, multitu-  
" des to the knowledge and to the love of God. Animated  
" with that burning zeal, which characterized the Apostle, she  
" commenced with God's blessing, the establishment of Chris-  
" tian schools, and undertook the education of young girls at  
" Ville-Marie. It is to this zeal of Margaret Bourgeoys, that  
" Canada owes her Christian mothers, who taught later, around  
" their own family hearths, the lessons they had once learned  
" from her : ' The love, and the fear of God.' But what do I  
" say, are you not the most glorious trophies of her zeal ? ' For  
" in Jesus Christ, by the Gospel, I have begotten you.'

" It was zeal, that led her to form a Congregation of Chris-  
" tian heroines, to fight the combats of the Lord, not behind  
" the walls of the cloister, but in the midst of the world. It  
" was for this, that she instituted you ' Secular Daughters of  
" the Congregation of Notre Dame ;' that you might be a  
" chosen portion of the flock, that the presence of God, might  
" be to you, an impregnable fortress, against the attacks of  
" your invisible enemies ; that you should be living tabernacles,  
" bearing Jesus Christ within you, gaining hearts to his love, by  
" means of a Christian education given to youth, and by the

“edification of your good examples, to maturer years. Ah !  
“precious, indeed, is the posterity which God has given to  
“your venerable mother. How glorious, how consoling the  
“thought, that a long suite of virgins, will come, with each  
“succeeding age, to bless her memory, as they offer themselves  
“to the heavenly bridegroom, drawn hither, by the per-  
“fume of her virtues and yours. Yes ! generations because of  
“her, will sing throughout eternity : ‘ the Canticle, that no man  
“knoweth, and follow the Lamb, wheresoever He goeth.”

“Finally, the third virtue, that Sister Bourgeoys drew from  
“her union with God, was that magnanimity of soul, that  
“Christian courage, which means confidence and faith. This  
“true daughter of Abraham, came out from her country and  
“her brethren, without even knowing the land, to which the  
“voice of God had called her. She obeyed, and threw her-  
“self into the arms of Providence, with a childlike abandon,  
“believing firmly, that out of her nothingness, God could bring  
“forth, a large and numerous progeny. ‘ I have made thee,  
“a father of many nations.’ Hence the courage and the intre-  
“pidity, with which she faced dangers : perils of ocean, perils  
“of war ; hence her invisible constancy, in every undertaking ;  
“constancy, which gave to her works, so glorious a success.  
“The Apostles, without eloquence and without human pru-  
“dence, wrought miracles, which neither riches, nor authority,  
“nor power could have executed. ‘ For the foolish things of  
“the world hath He chosen, that He may confound the strong.’  
“Sisters ! God’s arm is not shortened. He will do as much  
“by you. You, called upon to imitate the Apostles ; you,  
“called upon to walk in the footsteps of your incomparable  
“foundress. It is needless for me to say more. Your mother’s  
“remembrance will inspire you, it will teach you, all that you  
“should know, concerning those virtues, which were so dear  
“to her, which are so advantageous to you.

“Each time, that you enter this apartment, to perform your  
“different exercises, let your eyes rest upon this shrine, upon  
“this heart, so long the temple of the Holy Ghost. Let your  
“ears be open, to listen to your venerable mother, as she says

“to each and all. ‘Be ye followers of me, as I was of Jesus Christ;’ therefore, my dearly beloved, my joy and my crown, stand fast in the Lord, work out your perfection, and that of the flock confided to your care. So may we be reunited in Heaven.”

If anything were wanting, to inspire our readers, with still stronger convictions of Sister Bourgeoys’ sanctity, we might bring forward numerous testimonials, of the extraordinary cures obtained through her intercession, as well as tributes of respect and profound veneration, from the noblest and the most distinguished in the land. The numberless letters of condolence, written to the Sisters of the Congregation on this occasion, are replete with encomiums on the dead. A nation’s praise, was the reward of her deep humility. The day after her death, Sister Margaret Lemoine, of the Holy Ghost, third Superior of the Congregation, in her letter to the Sister Missionaries concerning this sad event, writes as follows :—

“Ville-Marie, January 12th, 1700.

“*My very dear Sisters,*

“I recommend to your prayers and filial solicitude, the soul of our most worthy Sister, Margaret Bourgeoys, who departed this life to-day, after three hours’ agony, and twelve days of a most painful illness. Our beloved and venerable Mother, was taken sick on New Year’s day, and notwithstanding her virtue, and particularly her admirable patience, her sufferings were at times so violent, that poor nature could not refrain from sending forth now and then, a cry of anguish. She died, my dear Sisters, as she lived ; loving God with her whole heart and soul, and manifesting a most vehement desire to be united to her Well-Beloved. Let us all endeavor to imitate her holy life, in the exercise of those virtues, of which she gave us, so many beautiful examples particularly ; her profound humility, her love for the practices of holy poverty, her zeal for the sanctification of souls ; by so doing, we may hope, that she will, one day, recognize us as her children.



"Pray for me, who occupies so unworthily, the place she so much honored.

"SISTER MARGARET LEMOINE,

"*Of the Holy Ghost," Superior of the  
Congregation of Notre Dame.*"

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Another Sister of the Congregation, writing this same day, to a person of distinction, says :—

"We may truly say, in speaking of our worthy foundress and respected Mother, Margaret Bourgeoys, that death is the echo of life. She was to us her children, a source of constant, of marvellous edification, up to her latest breath, by her gentleness, her patience, her spirit of submission to the different desires of those, who wished to alleviate her sufferings. We recommend her in a special manner to your pious prayers, and we beg of your extreme charity, to ask for us a participation in that spirit, which animated our dear deceased mother. May she live anew, in her bereaved children."

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JANUARY 13th, 1700.

An Ecclesiastic of merit and distinction, writes the day after. "Sister Bourgeoys' death occurred yesterday, her body was brought to Notre Dame for interment; her heart remains with her Congregation. Never before, had we witnessed at Ville-Marie, so great a concourse of priests and religious. Our two governors, general and local, assisted with a large number of persons from every rank."

We read in a letter, written to one of the Sister Missionaries, some four weeks after Sister Bourgeoys' death, as follows:

"Last Friday, a solemn *Requiem* Mass was offered up, in our private chapel, for the repose of the soul, of our much regretted Mother. At the same time; her heart, which is our portion, was enshrined with every mark of respect and venera-

"tion, in its assigned place. During the preceding month, every possible mark of deep respect, every possible tribute of honor were paid to this shrine of devotion; and I really think, that all the prayerbeads, scapulars, crucifixes, &c., of the entire city, were brought to us, that they might touch her precious relic."

Another Sister, writing about the same time, says: "On the evening of our venerable Mother's death, her body was placed in our private chapel. I cannot enumerate the numbers who came, with faith and devotion, to place different objects of piety, upon her coffin. The touching simplicity of those, who flocked around her inanimate form, was repaid by many signal favors. Even before her death, she gave assurances, that seemed to us miraculous evidences of her credit before the throne of God. Two days only before her death, the Sister who attended her, was so overcome by fatigue and a certain nauseous disposition, that she was compelled to leave our venerable Mother's bedside, and request one of her companions to supply her place. Our admirable patient perceived this, and looking at the infirmarian, she said, smilingly, 'It is nothing, Sister, it will soon pass away.' Hardly had she ceased speaking, when the Sister was instantaneously relieved, and able to resume her occupations.

"Our venerable Mother had wonderful energy and firmness, when reprimanding for faults committed against the rule; but she pardoned and forgot so easily, and so kindly, those committed against herself in person; when we approached to make known our feelings and offer our apologies, she received us in such a way, that our hearts were gained at once."

February 4th, 1700.

Mention is made of the porter of the Seminary, who on the day of the holy Sister's death, was suffering extremely from rheumatic pains in the head; his face was so much swollen, that it was impossible for him to take the slightest food. Confidence in Sister Bourgeoys' merit, led him to

apply to his face, a prayerbeads and medal, that had touched the body of the pious foundress. He was instantly cured, and commenced at once, to take his ordinary food.

A lady, well known to the Sisters, who had been a long time ill, applied a piece of linen, that had imbibed Sister Bourgeoys' blood, to the spot where her sufferings were most acute; her pains ceased at once, she fell asleep, and awoke in perfect health.

A young lady, suffering from a severe sore throat, was completely cured, after having simply invoked Sister Bourgeoys' intercession. Others, who were inspired to pray at her tomb, received a full compensation for their faith and devotion.

"If these marvellous events, that have been transmitted to us, by the eye-witnesses of that time, have not been juridically approved," writes an historian of 1700. "There is one fact incontestable, Sister Bourgeoys was herself a living miracle; her virtues, her undertakings, her success, all bore the stamp of prodigious, and though she has not been as yet, solemnly canonized by the Church, we trust the day is not far distant, when her name will be enshrined among the Saints of God." Notwithstanding, she has been proclaimed a thousand times blessed, by the cries of an entire nation, by the confidence of the high born and the lowly, as the following letters to her bereaved children will testify. The first comes from his Lordship Francis de Laval de Montmorency, the first Bishop of Quebec, whose relations with the deceased, had been long and intimate. He writes from Quebec soon after Sister Bourgeoys' death, to the Superior of the Congregation.

"Quebec, January 30th, 1700.

*My dear daughter in Jesus-Christ,*

"Your letter, containing the sad announcement of Sister Bourgeoys' death, was duly received. Your venerable Mother and Foundress, was a fruit ripe for Heaven. A source of constant edification during her life, she will still be an example of virtue to us after her death. She led a simple

"humble and retired life, consequently, she was the recipient  
"of many special favors and graces from on high. We have not  
"failed to give her a particular remembrance in our prayers,  
"and we shall continue to do so, though we are strongly con-  
"vinced, that she does not need them, and that she is already  
"in possession of eternal happiness. She will intercede for  
"us, before the throne of God, and there too, she will be of  
"wonderful assistance to her dear Congregation.

—  
"† DE LAVAL."

"Quebec, January 30th, 1700.

"*My dear child,*

"The perusal of your letter, which announced to me the  
"death of your pious foundress Sister Bourgeoys, pene-  
"trated my heart with feelings of deep affliction, and at the  
"same time of profound consolation. We cannot be otherwise  
"than convinced, that God bestowed upon her, His choicest  
"gifts and treated her as one of His most faithful and cherished  
"servants. Her life was marked by a lively faith, and a tender  
"charity for God and for her neighbour. The perfect accom-  
"plishment of these two commandments, have indeed pro-  
"cured for her entrance into the realms of bliss.

"Among the many virtues that I admired in her, there is  
"one in particular, that I would wish to practice myself; one  
"that impresses me strongly, and which I feel that I require  
"sadly. It is her hidden life; the life of recollection and deep  
"humility, which she led with so much edification, ever since  
"she resigned her place and title of Superior.

"How precious a grace for those who are called upon to  
"govern others! I look upon it, as one of the sacred marks  
"of predestination, when God grants an interval, between the  
"superiority and death, as we have then the means and the  
"time, to repair the faults we are so liable to commit, in  
"governing others.

"† DE SAINT-VALLIER, Bp. of Quebec."

“Quebec, January 30th, 1700.”

“*My dear Sister,*

“We have all taken part in the legitimate sorrow, caused by  
“the death of our good Sister Bourgeoys. We have ever con-  
“sidered her, as a perfect and faithful servant of God, filled  
“with His divine Spirit, and excelling in the virtues of  
“humility, meekness and perfect obedience towards those  
“placed over her, by God, as her Superiors, an entire abandon-  
“of herself into the hands of divine Providence. Her heart,  
“in its noble generosity, was capable of the most glorious un-  
“dertakings. I have not the slightest doubt, that you will  
“inherit her spirit, as well as her heart. I have prayed for her  
“with all my soul, and begged of her to pray for me in return.

“I remain, &c.,

“DES MAIZERETS,

“Superior of the Seminary of Quebec.”

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“Quebec, January 31st, 1700.”

“*My dear Sister in Christ,*

“Yesterday, your Sisters of Quebec, were apprized of the  
“death of the venerable Sister Bourgeoys, of holy and blessed  
“memory. They came to me with this sad intelligence, re-  
“questing for her a *Memento* in our prayers, and though I feel  
“assured that she does not stand in need of them, still I have  
“recommended her, in a special manner to the members of  
“our community; all are happy to think of her, before God.  
“I shall endeavor to surpass them all in fervor; and as I ever  
“entertained a singular respect and veneration for your illus-  
“trious deceased, I entreat you to send me something, that  
“belonged to her. Indeed, I do not think, that in all my  
“life, I ever met with a more virtuous person. She was truly  
“remarkable for greatness of soul, faith and confidence in God,  
“piety, zeal, humility and true mortification. Happily for her,

“ she died in the fulness of years and of merits, preserving her  
“ intellectual vigor, and all the fervor of her soul, up to her  
“ latest breath.

“ Yours, &c.,

“ P. BOUVART,

“ Superior of the Jesuit Fathers.”

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Reverend Mother of the Incarnation, Superior of the General  
Hospital of Quebec, writes to the Superior of the Congrega-  
tion of Notre-Dame :

Quebec, January 31st, 1700.

“ *My very dear Sister,*

“ Allow me to offer you and your entire community, my  
“ deep and heartfelt sympathy, on the occasion of your recent  
“ heavy loss. I feel, almost as much as you do yourself, the  
“ affliction you have suffered, in being deprived by death, of  
“ your dear and sainted mother. She was ripe for eternity ;  
“ a treasure lost to earth. Still, we trust, that she will con-  
“ tinue to live in her children, by the virtues she has be-  
“ queathed to them. Obtain for us, my dear Sister, a partici-  
“ pation in her spirit ; her love of humility, her detachment,  
“ her love of abjection, her confidence in God. These virtues  
“ shone conspicuously in every act of her life.

“ I remain, my dear Sister, &c.”

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Madam de Champigny, the Intendant's Lady, writes :

“ *My dear Sister,*

“ I can assure you that no one feels more grief, than I do,  
“ on account of Sister Bourgeoys' death. This loss is, no doubt,  
“ a great one ; still, you must feel consoled to think, that your  
“ regretted Mother, is a Saint, who will pray for her com-

"munity, more than ever, now that she is in Heaven. Since  
"she accomplished so much for you, here below, what may  
"you not expect from her powerful intercession. I shall  
"treasure as precious relics, the three beads of her rosary,  
"which you were so kind as to send me.

"Believe me, my dear Sister,

"Yours, &c.,

"H. L. DE CHAMPIGNY."

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The Superiors of the other communities, besides a number of religious persons, sent touching tributes to her memory. France was not forgetful, and when the sad tidings came across the deep, that her beloved child Margaret Bourgeoys was no more, many noble feelings were aroused, many sympathies were evoked, for the bereaved of these western shores. The trumpet of her fame, had resounded more than once, throughout her native land, fond hearts had listened with emotions of joy, to the recital of her wondrous deeds, and the heart of old France, throbbed with pride, as she called her, her child.

"Half a century and more, had well nigh passed by,  
Since her Margarita, her Pearl, had been torn from her breast,  
But its beauty came back, at this hour supreme.  
And fondly she smiled, as she thought of her blast."

Gentlemen distinguished for their piety and learning, who had met her, in the cabin and by the way side, leading hearts to God, they, who had known her devotedness, who had encouraged her hazardous beginnings spoke too, upon their return to France, of all that the pious Sister had accomplished; they told of her zeal for the salvation of souls, and added by their glowing words, to the beautiful reputation, that had already preceeded them there. Many other devoted friends, confided to vessels, leaving their native ports, sympathetic effusions, edifying and consoling to the bereaved, glorious and advantageous to the memory of the departed. Among those sent from Troyes, there is one, of peculiar interest to us, not that it por-



tray, the virtues of the deceased, in richer colors, but rather, because it comes from that Congregation in Troyes, which had been, as it were, the cradle of Sister Bourgeoys' heroisms, and at a later period, the theatre of many a noble sacrifice. It was there, that grace first began to sever the links, that bound her to the world ; it was there, that an interior voice, first spoke to her heart, and triumphed over her irresolutions ; there, that she heard for the first time, the name of her future home Canada ; there, the veil was lifted, and the future revealed.

Mother Mary Paul de Blaigné, Superior of this Congregation, alluding in her letter, to the different events of Sister Bourgeoys' life, adds : " Sister Bourgeoys, your mother and foundress, has ever been in veneration among us ; we have always esteemed her as a most saintly person. We have prayed for her, because you wished us to do so, though we are strongly persuaded, that she now enjoys the happiness of God, and that she will plead our cause, before His throne. The remembrance of her virtues, will ever dwell in our midst, and we shall never cease, to pay to her memory, a feeling tribute, of respect and esteem. She always evinced a sincere affection for us, affection, which we fully reciprocated. She has gone, but we desire most earnestly my dear Sister, to continue this union with you, and your dear daughters, whom we wish to consider, as our own Sisters." In another letter, written some time after, to a person of distinction, then residing in Canada, this same Superior says : " Our dear Sister Bourgeoys death, could not have been otherwise, than holy, closing as it did, a life so long, so virtuous and so meritorious."

" Here in France, her memory is in benediction."

Many other allusions, expressive of the highest veneration, for the virtues of the deceased, brought consolation to the members of her community. Precious missives, destroyed in the conflagration of 1768. Among those most to be regretted, are without doubt, the marks of sympathy given, by Sister LeBer, on this sad occasion. We have already spoken of this heroine of Canada, who attracted to the practices of perfect

virtue, by the beautiful examples given in Sister Bourgeoys' home, had condemned herself, to a life of perpetual seclusion from the world. Heroism, had placed its brightest seal upon the noble act, some years previous to Sister Bourgeoys' death, when Jane LeBer came, and placed the walls of the Congregation, between her heart and her home. There in that humble abode, she loved to express her admiration, for the incomparable foundress, of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Oh ! how she loved the gentle pious Sister, whom all called their Mother ! She, who knew her so intimately, she who never wearied extolling her virtue, and her merit ; and when the saintly friend, was taken home to Heaven, and messengers came, with tearful eyes, to announce the sad intelligence, we cannot but think, that her first act, was to clasp her hands, and raise her eyes to Heaven, as if she sought at once amid the blessed throng, the immortal soul, so loved by God, so revered by man ; then upon bended knee she adored the designs of Heaven, blessed and praised God, because He had accomplished so much, by means of his faithful servant ; all this we fancy was done, ere she heeded the weeping Sister, then with the calm that belongs to sanctity, she whispered softly, " Sister, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." The door of her cell closed, and a Saint, mourned a Saint.

" O Thou ! my Saviour, Thou my hope and trust,  
Faithful art Thou, when friends and joys depart,  
Teach me to lift these yearnings from the dust,  
And fix on Thee, th' unchanging One, my heart."

The following letter was written some years after Sister Bourgeoys' death, by the Reverend Father, F. L. B. Girard, of the Society of Jesus. We cannot do better, than add this high appreciation of Sister Bourgeoys' merit, to what has already been said. This distinguished religious, came to Canada after her death, about the time, that the first little manuscript containing her admirable life was written. The treatise fell into his hands, and after its perusal, he wrote the following letter to the Sisters of the Congregation.

*My dear Sisters in Christ,*

" I send you the little manuscript containing the life of your  
" virtuous foundress, with the liveliest feelings of gratitude. I  
" have read it again and again, and each time, it has been to  
" me, a source of singular edification. I thank God, for having  
" given to the "New World", a person of such marvellous  
" merit, and in you her children, I find her epitaph, her  
" eulogy.

" I offer you my warmest felicitations, that you were blessed  
" with a foundress and a Mother, who has merited the encom-  
" miums, of the most virtuous and the most distinguished, in  
" the land. To France she belonged by her birth, to Canada,  
" by right of possession, to Heaven by right of conquest ; and  
" as the pious Shepherdess of Nartés, became the protectress  
" of Paris, and of the entire french nation, so your illustrious  
" and venerable foundress, (if I may use the expression of a  
" pious ecclesiastic) was the protectress of New France. Like  
" unto Saint Genevieve, she loved poverty, and God enriched  
" her, with the precious gifts of grace ; humility and simplicity  
" shone in all her actions, and God glorified her prudence ;  
" she humbled herself, and God exalted her. Penance and  
" mortification were her only pleasures, and the God of ineff-  
" able consolation, filled her soul with celestial sweetness. In  
" a spirit of humility, she abandoned the theatre of Old France,  
" and God placed her as a shining light, in this new, this  
" western world. Burning with zeal, for the glory of God's  
" house, she became one of its brightest ornaments. Learning  
" that Canada was a land of martyrs, she came, and suffered  
" the martyrdom of patience, in the midst of all the inconve-  
" niences and privations, that attend voluntary poverty, that  
" accompany toilsome journeys, through ice and snow, through  
" trackless forests, in the midst of pain, fatigue, contradictions,  
" humiliations and sacrifices of every kind ; and finally, when  
" the hour came, she yielded up her pure soul to God, in the  
" midst of excruciating torments, heavenly joy and patience ;  
" as evinced by the canticles of praise and thanks giving, that

“ escaped her lips. Canticles of the heavenly Jerusalem. She  
“ died in the perfect imitation, of her Divine Master, the virtues  
“ and ardent zeal, of her heavenly Mother. It is the name of  
“ Mary, that she gives to her religious Congregation, the life  
“ of Mary, that she would have her daughters retrace, here  
“ below.

“ The name of your venerable foundress, was Margarita ;  
“ how truly and how beautifully, she exemplified in her daily  
“ life, the signification of so sweet a name. Margarita means  
“ a pearl. She is now a pearl of great price, a gem of inesti-  
“ mable worth.

“ Under the guidance of a Seminary, where virtue and  
“ science stand pre-eminent, she founded an institution, for the  
“ instruction of young persons of her sex ; and now, like unto  
“ a fruitful vine, it extends its branches all around, on the hill  
“ sides, and in the fertile plains, that border the magnificent  
“ Saint Lawrence. The child of Providence, she sends her  
“ children, destitute of funds, as sheep among wolves ; with  
“ the simplicity of the dove, and the prudence of the serpent,  
“ to exercise their portion of the sacerdotal ministry, to be the  
“ teachers, the guides of rising generations. The walls of their  
“ cloister is the fear of sin ; their wealth, is the labor of their  
“ hands.

.....  
“ The precious remains of your pious foundress, were taken  
“ from you, but her heart is in your midst, or rather she lives  
“ in your hearts. You, by your lives of edification, are her  
“ living monuments, her silent eulogies, if we may call silent,  
“ virtues that speak so eloquently.

“ Children of the Queen of Heaven, be ye her Apostles, to  
“ carry the knowledge and the love of Jesus into every heart.  
“ Daughters of Margarita, be ye, so many pearls, where with to  
“ build the heavenly Jerusalem. Secular daughters of the Con-  
“ gregation of Notre Dame, spread the good odor of Jesus-  
“ Christ around you ; enkindle within all those hearts, which  
“ Jesus-Christ, thirsts to claim as his own, that heavenly fire,  
“ whose flames are divine. Virgins, may you be the noblest

"portion of the Lord's inheritance: Vested in garments of  
"sable hue, you, mourn the death of your crucified spouse.

"Daughters of Margaret Bourgeoys, once again, be ye her  
"joy, her faithful imitators, her crown: Your joy is full, be-  
"cause your mother is a Saint, increase hers, by giving her  
"the assurance, that her children are worthy their mother.  
"Such is the ardent desire, that my heart forms for you, my  
"dear Sisters. Pray for me so fervently, that we may all be  
"reunited one day, in the mansions of eternal bliss, with her,  
"whose remembrance affords us so much real consolation.

"I remain, my dear Sisters,

"In the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

"Your humble and devoted Servt.,

"F. L. B. GÉRARD,

"Of the Society of Jesus."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND.

Recapitulation.—State of the Congregation in 1700.—How the Sister Missionaries lived at that time, 1704 and 1705.—Bishop de Saint Vallier leaves France, is taken prisoner, brought to London and presented to Queen Anne.—Five years in captivity.—He returns to France.—Thirteen years later.—The first manufactory set up at the Congregation of Notre Dame.—Mr. Leschassier of Saint Sulpice.—Testimonials of the zeal and energy shown by the Sisters of this Congregation, at this period.

What more shall we say, dear reader? We have contemplated with love and admiration, the different events, which marked in their own peculiar way, the well spent and saintly life of Margaret Bourgeoys.

We have lingered around many a pleasant scene, caught the soft echoes, of soul inspiring prayer, and in sweet communings with the hallowed past, grown wiser perhaps, and better able "to fight the good fight;" and thus attain the goal, as the Saints have done. We have mused on all that was good and heroic in Margaret Bourgeoys; we have followed her step by step, through the varied circumstances of her life at home; gazed upon the fair young girl, and listened to the thrilling accents of her voice, as she vowed her pure heart to God alone. We accompanied her in spirit, when she braved, the stormy deep, to seek out immortal souls, in obedience, to her Master's will, that she might lead them to His love. She does not shrink,

"Her simple faith,  
More strong than human love,  
Sees, through the open gates of death,  
Her happiness above."

We have watched her by the way side, and in the lowly cabin, instructing and consoling, by her words and by her deeds. We have seen her toiling, watching, praying, in behalf of the youthful city, she loved so well; and later, when the responsibilities and cares, of her growing sisterhood

increased, we blessed her motherly devotedness, and we rejoiced over the magnanimity and heroism of her virtue. We have witnessed the beautiful close of her earthly pilgrimage; paid our tribute of admiration to her memory, and murmured with the Evangelist: "Blessed are the servants, whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." One hundred and seventy-eight years have passed since Margaret Bourgeoys's death, and still her work goes on. Generation in succeeding generation, has faithfully transmitted her spirit of apostolic zeal, to those, who were called to perpetuate her teachings. The spirit of sacrifice and immolation, with which she commenced her work, and which she bequeathed to her children, when her pure soul winged its flight on high, still lives in all its pristine freshness. Children of her children's children, lisp her name with fondness, and hearken to the faintest echo, of her renown; the virtues that perfumed the lowly precincts of her first humble convent, still shed their fragrance around our path. Margaret Bourgeoys has gone; from a higher sphere, she presides over the interest of her cherished family. She has gone, but her memory has its mission to fulfil, and many an act to angels dear, is blended with her loved remembrance. Heaven has watched most lovingly, over her Congregation, and we, still lingering upon the threshold of its glorious past, with silvery echoes, from the oft-told tale of her virtues, still floating around us; with still sweeter memories of those halcyon days, when God was all in all, gladdening our inmost soul. What think we of those wondrous out pourings of celestial favors? What think we of Heaven's marked predilection, for the city of Ville-Marie? What think we of the intrepid heroines, its pride and glory, who came to these western shores, to speak of Heaven and its joys, to those who knew them not? Intrepid in word and deed, they brought with them faith, hope and love, with courageous zeal, to embrace the rude tasks, assigned them. 'Twas all their portion. How angels smiled upon their endeavors; how God blessed a Margaret Bourgeoys; how He loved her Congregation; how He favored those who came in succeeding years, to continue her work, her labors of love, and



extend her devotion to our heavenly Mother, throughout the land. Was it not her dear, her special mission? God will not be outdone, by His creatures in generosity; and he gave to Margaret Bourgeoys in return for the eighty years of unswerving fidelity in His service; in return for the forty-seven years of missionary toil, sacrifices, humiliations of every kind endured so meekly and so unreservedly, for His love; He gave according to his divine promise, "the hundred fold for here below," above, an eternity of endless bliss. He gave to the Congregation, the most precious garant of divine complacency, when He placed thereon, the stamp dearest to his heart, the name, the love, the gracious guardianship of His own Mother Mary. And now, ere we leave these scenes, let us snatch from the annals of the Congregation, a few traits, which will illustrate, all we have said, touching Margaret Bourgeoys and the many special proofs of divine protection, given to her institution. We will not enter into any chronological detail, concerning the subsequent history, of the Congregation; this, we reserve for a later period. We would simply cast a glance, here and there, as we descend the stream of years, rejoicing on our way, as some beautiful picture of the past, suddenly arises before our eyes, bringing back many a familiar scene, of that glorious "Long ago." The year 1700, opened as we have remarked, with the death of the saintly foundress of the Congregation. When leaving this world, for a higher and a better, she left to her bereaved children, a well traced route, with every facility, for walking therein. She left them, for when the fruit is formed, falls one by one, the guardian petals, of the Mother flower. We read that the community of Ville-Marie, at this period, was composed of fifty-four members; forty-six professed sisters, four novices and four aspirants, to the religious life. Let us penetrate, dear reader, into the privacy of their domestic circle, and see how perfectly, they portray Margaret Bourgeoys' life, in their own daily actions. At the mother house, as well as, in their different missions, the Sisters led a most laborious life; and not unfrequently, after having spent the allotted time, in the school-room with their pupils, they were compelled to con-

secrete their leisure moments, and even a great part of the night, to manual labor. We read in one of the reports made about this time, to the Governor General, "that the Sisters, employed in the missions of Quebec, and adjacent places, were few in number, but indefatigable in the exercise of good words. Their time was completely taken up, with the arduous duties of their vocation, that they had scarcely a few hours left, to earn their subsistence. Notwithstanding, adds the report," they exert themselves to the utmost, so as to be a burden to none. And, as their night's rest must be sacrificed in part, to accomplish these duties, several, from having over taxed their strength, have completely ruined their health."

Happily, they exerted themselves, through love for a Divine Master, who recompenses liberally, the slightest act done for Him. There were about twenty sisters, employed at this time, outside of the mother house, and they taught gratuitously, in their different localities, all the children that came to them, the sisters here, as elsewhere, gaining their livelihood by their own industry. The community of Ville-Marie, watched, with all a mother's anxiety and solicitude, over these growing missions, and many were the privations and the sacrifices, imposed each day, to procure assistance, to their dear missionaries. How do they manage to live, at the Congregation, and at the same time afford relief to others? was often heard. It was a problem, that none could solve; true, it is, however, that more than once, the miracle "of the five loaves and two fishes," was renewed in their favor, as it had been, during their incomparable mother's life.

The Congregation of Notre Dame, was still in Heaven's own keeping. Then came the years, 1704 and 1705, which spread desolation, around the hearths of Ville-Marie. Historical facts, relative to this period, have rendered familiar to all, the successive wars, in which France had been engaged for several years. The magnificent laurels, won by Turenne and Condé, reflected no doubt, immense glory upon the entire nation, and carried for its sovereign, the surname of "Great." The mother court-

try's exiled children beyond the sea, exulted in her glory, and their very hearts, throbbed with joy, at the recital of her victories.

The year 1704, witnessed a total change of fortune ; when Eugene and Marlborough, having united their forces, near the village of Blenheim, gained that decisive battle, which crimsoned the soil, with the heart's blood, of many a slain. To defeats, upon the field of battle, were added naval disasters, which brought to the inhabitants of Canada, with severe losses, many an hour of suffering, many a tear of bitter anguish. The hospitality, previously granted by France, to the unfortunate James of England, had renewed hostilities, and the latter, now mistress of the seas, intercepted, all reinforcements sent to Canada. Mr. de Saint-Vallier, Bishop of Quebec, was in France at this time ; diocesan affairs, had long retained him there ; he knew, that his children were plunged, into the deepest affliction, not only because of their own troubles, but also, on account of his prolonged absence. Consequently, he desired with all the ardor of his soul, to return to them, and commenced at once, active preparations, for his departure from the shores of France.

Presenting himself at court, to take leave of his Majesty, Louis the XIV, to whom he was peculiarly dear, he met there, with a sad disappointment, which cast in a moment, a sort of gloom over his bright anticipations. Could he have foreseen the heavy trial ! Louis the XIV was well aware, that his Lordship's presence, was more than ever, needful to his flock ; still, he did his utmost to dissuade the prelate from undertaking, at this moment, a journey in every way perilous. "The English vessels are lying in wait, upon the high seas," replied his Majesty, "and I should feel extremely grieved, if a Catholic Bishop fell into their hands." These words he repeated, as if to caution his Lordship, against the dangers which were inevitable, should he persist in his resolution. Bishop de Saint-Vallier retired from court ; but the king's opposition, only strengthened his desire, to return to his own.

Unable to master this inclination, and submit to the royal

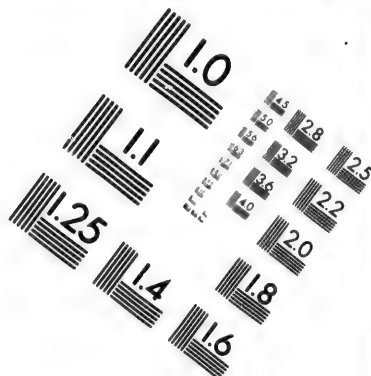
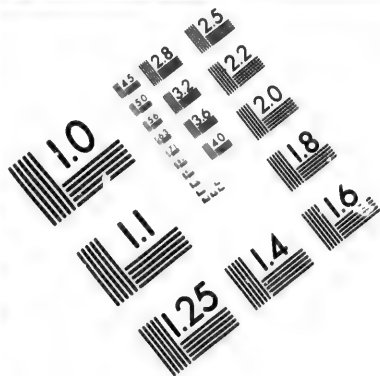
pleasure, he wrote to Louis the XIV, saying, "that if his Majesty, consented to be responsible before God, for the fault he committed, in remaining so long, and so far away, from his post, he would submit most willingly, to the royal decision." These words produced the desired effect; the king reflected, and not wishing to take this responsibility upon himself, he finally yielded and allowed the prelate to depart from France. Bishop de Saint-Vallier hastened to "Larochelle," and sailed from this port, in one of the king's own vessels, called the "Seine." Several merchant ships, loaded with indispensable clothing materials for Canada, left France, at the same time. Three weeks glided rapidly by; at the expiration of this time, they espied an English fleet in the distance, which was guided by a favorable wind. The French vessels, were soon surrounded so closely, that escape was impossible. The royal navire, too heavily loaded to defend itself, remained in the enemy's hands; the other vessels, profiting of the momentary confusion, found means to unfurl their masts, and hastened away, leaving the "Seine," with its rich cargo of necessities for Canada, to its own defence. There were many passengers on board, and mention is made of some eighteen clergymen, who accompanied Bishop de Saint-Vallier. The English officers mounted on deck; at this moment, some one advised his Lordship, to conceal the cross, which hung suspended from his neck, so that he might not be recognized; he did so. The English Admiral came forward at this moment; having heard that the Bishop of Canada, was among his prisoners, he demanded, "why he concealed this mark of his dignity." His Lordship replied, "that he did so, to preserve his sacred character of Bishop, from insult." "But I am obeyed here," rejoined the Admiral, "and would never have suffered any one, to act disrespectfully in your presence."

The vessels soon reached the shores of England. All the prisoners were conducted to Plymouth, and from thence to London, where they were presented to Queen Anne. Her Majesty, gave a most gracious reception to her distinguished prisoner, Bishop de Saint-Vallier, and treated him with every

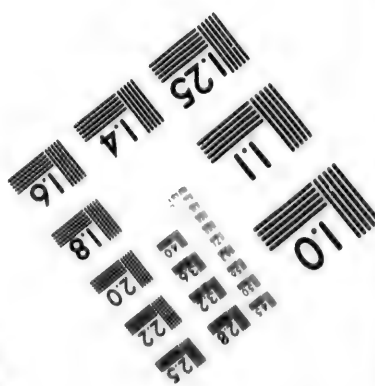
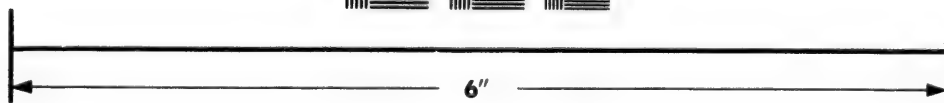
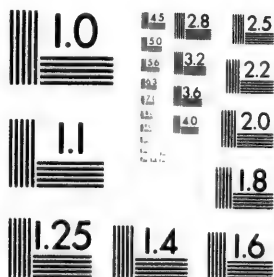
mark of respect, during the period of his captivity. She assigned him a considerable sum, for his daily expenses, and provided, in every possible way, for the comfort of the ecclesiastics, who were in his company. All the prisoners returned to France in the course of the year; but on account of difficulties, which had arisen, between the Queen of England and the King of France, his Lordship, was retained as hostage, for the space of five years, (1) which he devoted almost exclusively, to the functions of his ministry; visiting the sick, consoling the priests and religious, whom adversity had driven to the shores of England. Bishop de Saint-Vallier then returned to France, from which place, he governed his diocese, through the medium of his Vicar General. Some thirteen years elapsed, before circumstances, permitted him to return to his flock. The winter of 1704 passed by, a most severe one in Canada; hearts were almost in despair; hundreds feared to die from the cold, and no clothing material could be procured, theirs was a sad lot. They hoped and prayed, but no tidings, concerning the "Seine." It was only three years later, that rumors came, respecting its sad destiny. All then understood, why France had been seemingly, so forgetful of her exiled children, who had unceasingly implored her assistance. So far, as we have already remarked, all mercantile goods had been imported from France. The great distance, and subsequent political events, rendered the procurement, of these different articles, almost impossible. Consequently, it became urgent for Canada, to lay aside her youth-

(1) It was about this time, that the Baron de Mean, Dean of the Cathedral of Liege, was arrested by order of the King of France. The Chapter of this Cathedral, was composed entirely of princes, some of whom, possessed regal fortunes, and almost regal power. The Baron de Mean was of this number. Being suspected of carrying on secret communications, contrary to the interests of Phillip the Fifth, King of Spain, Louis the XIV, commanded that the Dean should be seized, at the hour he generally left the Cathedral, and confined in a strong castle. The Baron implored Queen Ann's intercession, at the same time, that King Louis was interceding for Bishop de Saint-Vallier's release.

Her Majesty would not yield; declaring that his Lordship should be treated in the same way as the Baron de Mean; still more, that the Bishop of Canada, could only be ransomed by the Baron's liberty. Neither would consent, and these intercessions and negotiations lasted for five entire years, at the expiration of which time, the respective crowns gave up their prisoners.



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ful dependence, and act upon her own resources. To the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice, this benefactor of an entire nation, Ville-Marie, owes her catholicity, and her progress, in civilization ; to this same well spring, is also due, the first exertions made by the Canadians, in the art of manufacturing. Through the influence and the generosity, of its members, in procuring all the essential requisites, for the undertaking, the citizens of Ville-Marie, were induced to commence, the fabrication of their own linen, and woollen garments. It was at this time also, that the Sisters of the Congregation, in order to relieve their own necessities, and form their pupils to the practice, of a domestic branch, so essential at the moment, set up weaving machines, in their own house, and began at once, to manufacture a kind of black serge, out of which, they made their religious habit.

A number of the citizens, imitated their industry ; and we read, "that within the space of a few months, no less than twenty-five, of these looms were located, in the city of Ville-Marie." We can easily imagine, what these primitive attempts in the art of manufacturing, were. Coarsely wrought textures, that would no doubt, have called forth a smile and a sarcasm, in our day of refinement and progress ; but stern necessity has its laws, as heroic deeds have their recompense, and we know, that the result of these industrial pursuits, elated the hearts of all, with a sweet and triumphant joy, for nothing can be dearer, than the fruit of one's own labor. These redoubled efforts, made difficulties disappear ; in course of time, both linen and woollen goods were manufactured, with all possible skill and perfection, as the following extract from a letter, written about this period will show. "The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame," writes the Intendant of Canada to the Minister of the Navy, "showed me some days ago, the material, out of which they make their religious habit. It is of their own manufacture, and I can assure you, that it is as fine and as nice, as any, that we receive from France."

The introduction of these manufactures, could remedy, alas ! but a small portion of the manifold miseries, that af-

fllicted the colony. France, exhausted by incessant wars, was unable to send assistance, to the shores, which she had herself colonized, and she yearned to shelter, in her bosom, her suffering children, who stretched in vain towards her, their imploring hands. The Sisters of the Congregation, were, perhaps, more exposed than others, to the rigors of this public calamity; but these privations were to them, a source of real sanctification, because of the humble loving submission, with which mind and heart accepted them; and, no doubt, Margaret Bourgeoys looked down with renewed complacency, upon her children, as they trod so meekly, the thorny path of sufferings and sacrifices; they were truly, her children, her worthy children of the Congregation. "It is, indeed, a great satisfaction for me to receive your letters," writes Mr. Leschassier, of Saint Sulpice, to the Sisters of the Congregation, "because I see therein, that God has deigned to bestow upon your community, His holy grace, which enables you to bear patiently, all the trials and crosses, He has been pleased to send you; privations, inseparable from your daily occupations, and to which you are more than ever exposed, on account of the country and the times, in which you live. Continue, my dear Reverend Mother, to encourage your children, and to inspire them with a true, a generous love of the cross. This salutary wood, is to us a source of untold blessings, and nothing draws down, more graces upon a soul, than a voluntary, or at least, submissive participation in the cross of Our Saviour, and devotion to His Most Holy Passion. I have requested Mr. de Belmont, (1), to procure you all the assistance and consolation, that the present state of things

(1) Mr. de Belmont, here mentioned, had succeeded Mr. Dollier de Casson, in the Superiority of the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. Mr. de Casson, the year previous to his death, gave the Sisters of the Congregation, a last pledge of his esteem and devotedness, in granting them the privilege of having their sepulture in the Church of Notre Dame, and the free use of the Chapel of the Infant Jesus, this favor has extended down to our own day.

In the act, which bears testimony to this favor, we read:  
"The Parish of Notre Dame, wishes to testify by this act, its gratitude towards the Sisters, in return for the good and pious examples, they have ever given, and for the immense services, they have rendered to the colony, in instructing and forming to the practice of virtue, numberless young persons of their sex."

"will allow. I beg your prayers, Reverend Mother, and a share in those of your pious Sisterhood." There was, indeed, but one voice, among the writers of the period, to render homage to the important services, which the colony of Ville-Marie received from the Congregation.

Leclercq, one of the Recollet Fathers, speaks of them, as follows: "The Sisters of the Congregation, succeed wonderfully in Montreal. They have a boarding-school, well attended, besides external classes; — the young girls who frequent them, are not only formed to habits of virtue, but are taught at the same time, every useful and agreeable branch becoming their sex. These good Sisters, also prepare school teachers for the different villages near Montreal." Later, Mr. de Champigny, says among other things, in a letter to the french minister at Court: "A great number of little girls, attend the schools, taught by these Sisters, where they learn to sew, to knit, and all kinds of needle work, besides being well trained to their Christian duties." De Ramsay, Governor of Montreal, adds: "The Sisters of the Congregation, are indispensable to the colony; the success that attends their labors, is worthy of our highest admiration." Later, still, Mr. Raudot, who succeeded Mr. de Champigny, in the office of Intendant, spoke most favorably of the Congregation in his Court's dispatches; at the same time, he proved his devotedness to this institution, by repeated demands for assistance, so as to enable the Sisters to establish themselves in all those localities, that required the benefit of their zeal and their examples. "The Sisters of the Congregation," he continues, "could not be more useful than they are, to the colony. By means of their different establishments in our rising towns and country places, and thanks to their zealous care, a large part of the youth of our population, has been withdrawn, from the state of ignorance, in which they would invariably have lived, had it not been for the Sisters' kindly assistance. There are still a number of Parishes, where it would be desirable to establish branches of the Congregation; immense good would result for the entire country, by

"the bestowal of funds for this purpose. It would be necessary at the same time, to do something of the kind for the boys, and no expense incurred by His Majesty, could be more useful or more necessary. We can judge from the result of the Sisters' efforts, what a similar institution would produce for the boys." But all these marks of esteem and devotedness, given to the Congregation, by the most distinguished persons in the land, and particularly by Mr. Raudot, could not shield it from contradictions and crosses; and the institution, that devoted friends wished to extend and maintain, became again a prey to troubles and anxieties, occasioned by a misguided zeal, and a false interpretation of its spirit and its rules. These events signalized the reign of Sister Catherine Charly, of the Blessed Sacrament; the heroine of Sister Bourgeoys' devotedness, of her last noble sacrifice. Would it not be well, dear reader, to speak more at length of this pious Sister, so loved by God, and by the worthy foundress of her institution; it would prove, how truly Sister Bourgeoys was inspired by Heaven, when she yielded up her life, that another might be spared, thereby imitating the example of her Divine Master. We shall consecrate a few lines, in one of the following chapters, to the family of this admirable and virtuous Sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame :

"Upon whose face is marked  
Expression, holy, deep, resigned,  
The calm sublimity of mind."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD

A picture of the past, or Canada in 1700.—Confidence of the people, in Sister LeBer's intercession. — Sister Bourgeoys' external Congregation.—Sister LeBer's banner.—The Baron of Longueuil and his expedition.—The English fleet, before Quebec.—Sad disaster, incident to this event. — The Governor General of Canada expresses his gratitude on this occasion.—Our Lady of Victory.

It was the year 1711. The discordant sounds of war, resounded around the youthful city of Ville-Marie, and formed a strange contrast, to the peaceful smiling scenes, that lay within its borders. Scenes, whose beauties were enhanced, by rich autumnal shades, and plentiful golden harvests. Canada, had long been the object of English conquest; came the moment, when the long threatened invasion was put into execution. At the period, of which we are writing, some 3,000 men left New York, armed and equipped for battle, with their field pieces, and all the ammunition necessary to attack Ville-Marie by land, while a fleet, far more considerable, was directed towards Quebec. "These armies," we read, "were more numerous than all the united forces of Canada." Ville Marie's sole rampart was a pike fence, and no wonder, that the citizens were in despair; they looked around in vain for assistance; none was to be found in man. They remembered then the words of the psalmist: "Our God is our refuge and our strength, our Helper, in troubles, which have fallen on us;" and louder and stronger, than in their most hopeful days, *Sursum Corda*, reechoed throughout each brave christian heart. On high, were fixed their imploring gaze and outstretched arms; never perhaps, were souls more open to the call of grace, than in this extremity, when their Altars and their homes were threatened, to become either a mass of ruins, or a shelter and a refuge, for the enemies of their nation and their creed. In order to avert the storm, the people had recourse to prayer and mortification; voluntary penances, fasts, religious

processions, frequentation of the Sacraments, now became manifestations of man's faith and trust in God. Multitudes of the weaker sex, consented to sacrifice their natural tendencies to dress and vain ostentation, and vowed, to wear neither ribbands, nor laces, nor jewels, for the space of a year. Still more the members of Sister Bourgeoys' external Congregation, made a solemn promise, that if Heaven deigned to preserve Ville-Marie, from the approaching danger, they would build a chapel in honor of "Our Lady of Victory," so as to hand down to posterity, a monument of their lasting gratitude.

While consternation was depicted upon every countenance, Sister LeBer's cousin and faithful attendant, Annie Barroy entered the cell of the recluse, and informed her of the dreaded calamity, in hopes that her prayers and supplications, might draw down divine protection upon her country, and upon her countrymen. She had, no doubt, been prevailed upon to act thus, by the citizens of Ville-Marie, who deemed the sojourn of this pious recluse in their midst, a blessing and a favor conferred upon them by God; in consequence, they relied as confidently upon her mediation with Heaven, as though her name had been already enrolled among the Saints of God, and altars raised, to perpetuate her memory, her fame. Upon hearing the above mentioned details, Sister Leber, remained for some time absorbed in her own thoughts; then, as if struck by some irresistible conviction, she turned towards her attendant, saying with calm and assurance. "Fear not, our heavenly Mother, will guard this country, and in particular this city, so specially consecrated to her."

Anxieties increased, and the inhabitants feared every moment, to see their loved Ville Marie, besieged by the enemy. Sister Leber was again informed of the apparent danger; this time she took within her hands, a picture representing the Mother of God, and wrote upon it the following prayer: Queen "of Angels, Our Sovereign and Our dear Mother, your children of the Congregation, place all their confidence in you; all their hopes are in your intercession. Relying upon your motherly benevolence, they beg that you will not allow

"the enemy, to take possession of what belongs to those, who are under your special protection." She then gave the picture to her cousin, requesting that it should be fastened to the barn-door of the Congregation, so that the provisions and other necessities, which had been stored away there, might not be injured. No sooner was Sister LeBer's pious act known, than numbers hastened to the Congregation with pictures, which they had brought for that purpose, and begged, that the recluse would write similar prayers upon them. Humility prevented her from yielding to that request; her refusal dissatisfied them, and in consequence they seized the original and thus, compelled her to write the same prayer over again (1).

The confidence thus testified, was not limited to the poor and lowly; universal respect was paid to her reputation of sanctity; the most eminent, and the most distinguished persons in the land, gave her every mark of esteem and confidence, in these moments of public calamity. Her cousin the Baron of Longueuil, surnamed the Machabeus of Montreal, was Governor at this time, he resolved at this critical juncture, to attack the advancing enemy, without further delay; but, as his sole reliance, was in the protection of that Virgin Mother, who had been chosen Sovereign of the country, he wished to march with a banner, having her image on one side, and on the other, a prayer, composed and written by Sister LeBer. She could not refuse this favor, as pious as it was lawful. Consequently she prepared the banner, placed thereon, the pure image of the Immaculate Conception, then wrote around it, the following inscription. "Our enemies rely upon the strength of their arms; we trust in the Queen of Angels, whom we invoke. She is terrible as an army in battle array, with her assistance, we will vanquish our enemies?" The banner was blessed in the church of Notre Dame, by Mr. de Belmont, Superior of the Seminary of Saint-Sulpice; then, solemnly placed in the Baron's hands, in presence of a large number of

(1) This picture is still preserved at the Congregation, and the prayer which Sister LeBer composed and wrote, with her own hand, is recited daily by the Sisters, at the close of their evening prayer.



persons, who had assembled to witness this imposing scene. De Longueuil received the standard, as a mark of protection from above, and bearing it, in his own hands, he went forth to meet the enemy, notwithstanding the fears and anxieties of those around him. "If the wind is favorable," exclaimed Annie Barroy, as she entered her cousin's cell, "the English fleet, will soon be before Quebec, and the fate of the colony sealed." The trusting recluse reassured her, saying, "Sister, your fears will not be realized, our heavenly Mother, has promised to watch over this country. She is our guardian, should we apprehend any danger under her protection?" Wordly wisdom, would no doubt have condemned this calm assurance, and smiled at her trusting faith in Heaven, but time told, that her answer came from above, for it is a most well known historical fact, that when the fleet destined to attack Quebec, had entered the Saint Lawrence, and lay to the north of "L'île aux Œufs," a violent south wind arose, dispersed the vessels, while some of the largest were dashed to pieces on the rocks; the waters and the shores were covered with the floating bodies of the dead. Thunder and lightning seemed to render the scene more terrific. "One ship" we are told, "was struck so violently, that its keel was thrown far up, on the land." This disaster intimidated the admiral, and caused him to apprehend the loss of the remainder of his fleet; he returned directly to London, with the few ships under his command. Two sailors only escaped, to bring home the sad tidings. Hearing that the fleet had been destroyed, the land forces sent to attack Ville-Marie retraced their steps.

The Canadians might well consider this event, as a striking proof of divine protection. The Governor General de Vaudreuil, wrote as follows, to the Minister of the French Navy: "We return thanks to God, for the miraculous protection, which He has been pleased to confer upon the colony. All are unanimous in the belief, that the Almighty has preserved the colony, and that His hand alone, caused the destruction of the English fleet, and permitted, that not a single man should be lost, on our side."

Mother Juchereau, in her history of the Hotel-Dieu of Quebec, gives us the following details, which may not prove uninteresting to our readers, she writes :

" All those who had witnessed this catastrophe, assured us, " that there was an immense quantity of useful articles among " the wreck. It was thought proper to gather them up. In " consequence, a vessel was loaded, and some forty men were " sent to the spot, so that when spring came, they could set to " work. They remained there, until the month of June, then " came back with five ships heavily laden ; from them, we " received the following account. It was a fearful sight," they " told us, " to behold more than 2,000 bodies strewn along " the beach, (1) in every attitude, that despair and fear could " assume. Seven women, who had apparently perished together, were found, holding each other by the hand. The " English were so certain of victory, that they brought with " them their wives and children. It was a sad, a heart-rending " spectacle, and the fetid scent, borne along by the breeze, was " insupportable ; for though a number of these bodies were carried away, by the tide each day, more than enough remained " to infect the air. Many veteran heroes, were among them, " and could be easily recognized, because they wore decorations ; commissions were found upon them, signed by " James the II of England, who was a refugee in France, in " 1689. There were also Catholics among these unfortunate " creatures, who were easily distinguished, because they wore " on their clothes and persons, pictures and medals, which " proved their devotion to our Blessed Lady. A quantity of " cannon, bullets, iron chains, &c., a provision of cloth, blankets, magnificent saddles, silver swords, double tents, guns, " table utensils, locks of every kind, clocks, and many other " articles, all of which were sold at auction, every one being " desirous of obtaining some little object, in remembrance of " this wonderful event, and of the visible protection, which " Heaven had granted to the colony."

Many acts of thanksgiving went up, from numberless grateful

(1) Bancroft, the American historian, says 1,000 bodies.

hearts, and echoes of the soul-stirring *Te Deum*, rolled along the hill-sides and valleys of Canada. Religion received with open arms, the hearts that had grown lax in her service, but now returned to that God, who has promised mercy and compassion to the repentant soul. Every solemn resolution, taken in the moment of danger was now accomplished ; but none, perhaps, evinced greater ardor, than the young persons who composed Sister Bourgeoys' external Congregation. They set to work at once. The Sisters of the Congregation gave them a portion of the convent grounds, and the sanctuary of "Our Lady of Victory," which they had vowed to build, soon raised its modest head, above the dwellings of Ville-Marie. The chapel of "Our Lady of Victory," built by the pious gratitude of 1711, was destroyed in the conflagration of 1768; it was reconstructed the following year, through the generous assistance of Mr. de Montgolfier, of Saint-Sulpice, a signal benefactor of Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation.

So far, the Sodality had been solely under the guidance of the Sisters, but it now assumed a new form, in giving more extension to that devotion, which was one of the strongest desires of Sister Bourgeoys' heart. Mr. Jollivet, curate of Notre Dame, took this Society into his own hands, and presided at all their reunions up to the time of his death. Thus the sodality of "Our Lady of Victory," has become a parochial work, at which a sister of the Congregation always assists. To increase the devotion of the faithful, towards the glorious patroness of the Society, Mr. de Montgolfier obtained from his Holiness, Benedict the XIII, many precious privileges and indulgences.

Its grey stone walls, still stand, a tell tale of the past. At present, the beautiful sanctuary of "Our Lady of Pity," stands beside the venerable pile, within the convent enclosure, and here, have been held of late years, the weekly reunions of the Society. More than 300 members recite together, every sunday, the office of Our Blessed Lady, and by their communions and other pious acts, they keep alive within their hearts, the salutary teachings, and the virtuous practices, which were taught to their elders, by Margaret Bourgeoys, in 1658. It is consequently the

oldest confraternity in Montreal, where multitudes of young persons, have persevered in the practice, of every virtue, that should adorn the female heart. "Our Lady of Victory" still dear, because of its antiquated appearance, and the many hallowed remembrances connected with its history, now receives within its old fashioned portals, a joyous throng of happy youth, who partake there, of the benefits and the advantages of a thorough christian education, and who bless the stream of science, as it flows.

'Tis a spot, where flowers of joy and peace,  
Spring from the fertile sod;  
And breathe the perfume of their praise,  
On every breeze to God.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH.

An echo of 1700.—Sister Catherine Charly of the Blessed Sacrement.—Marie du Mesnil.—Four Sisters of the Congregation.—Marie Charly's mission.—Sister Catherine Charly's early days.—She consecrates her youth to the service of God, in Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation.—The rule of the Congregation.—Death of the pious Sister.

You have not forgotten, dear reader, that eventful night, the first of 1700, when Margaret Bourgeoys yielding to a divine inspiration, performed an act, the most heroic that christian charity could suggest.

Echoes, of these soul-inspiring words, are still lingering in our ears. "Why not take me, the old and useless, and spare that poor Sister, who can yet serve thee long?" We remember how agreeable these words were to Heaven, and how sweetly they fell upon the eternal ear, for they were heeded.

Sister Catherine Charly, came back from the gates of Heaven, in answer to Sister Bourgeoys' prayer, "spare that poor Sister, who can yet serve thee long." It would seem, as we read over the annals of the Congregation, relative to a period, so fertile in sacrifices and privations of every kind, that, the venerable foundress had foreseen, the sea of conflicts and dangers, through which her beloved institution was destined to pass, and that with her usual discrimination, she had chosen to conduct her frail bark, at this time, the gifted nun, upon whom her prophetic glance had rested, and for whom, she had so generously given up her life. "Spare that poor Sister, who can yet serve thee long." Sister Catherine Charly lived, and at the period of which we are writing, was the fourth Superior of the Congregation. It may not be amiss, as we pass by the years, that bear testimony to her wise and judicious government. We speak of this pious Sister, as the annals of the house represent her, and as Margaret Bourgeoys loved her. We read that, "she was born in one of the most virtuous families, with which God had blessed Canada. Her father, Andrew

Charly de Saint-Ange, was alike distinguished for his piety, talents and unswerving rectitude in the path of honor. It was in Paris, his native city, that he consented to join the colonists, in their praise worthy undertaking, and through the medium of the Baron de Renty, his services were offered and accepted by the Montreal Company.

The highest encomium we can bestow upon her Mother, Marie du Mesnil, is to say, that Royer de la Dauversière, made choice of her, to bear to Ville-Marie, that spirit of faith and religion, so necessary in the formation of a colony. It was in the year 1653, that she came to Canada, accompanied by Sister Bourgeoys and Mr. de Maisonneuve.

Many thoughts must have crowded upon the young girl's mind, during the long wearisome journey, as she listened to Mr. de Maisonneuve's descriptions of the people, with whom she was going to live, their strange customs and novel ways; and when finally, the site of her future home, fell full in view, indescribable emotions, must have caused her heart to beat with joy and gratitude to God. What was to be her future? What would time bring her, upon its shadowy pinions? Ah! could she have lifted the veil and cast a glance upon her coming years, wonder and admiration would have quickened her pulse, and sent their throbs down to her heart of hearts; she would have almost worshipped the incomparable woman, by whose side she lingered, to catch,

"Tho' 'twere but an echo,  
Of those gentle tones, so full of  
Love, and sweet persuasiveness."

From all that we have heard, from all that we have read, there must have been something irresistibly attractive, about Sister Bourgeoys, while her virtue triumphed over hearts and difficulties.

"None knew her, but to love."

The year after their arrival in Canada, Andrew Charly de

Saint-Ange, and Marie du Mesnil, were united in marriage, (1), and later, of the children that blessed their union, four consecrated their lives to God, in the rising institution of the Congregation. The first Sister, Marie Charly de Saint-Ange, a pure young blossom, too lovely far, for earth, came in her soft beauty and dove like innocence, to Margaret Bourgeoys' side, and promised there, in 1679, her young heart to God alone. Her career was beautiful and short;—she lingered, but three years beside the saintly Sister, who had watched over her infancy, and who gave her back to Heaven, ere she had completed her eighteenth year. She had accomplished her mission here below, for,

"Angels have their mission here below,  
And the sweet fragile flowers too."

When Jane LeBer, returned from Quebec, at the close of her school-days, and entered anew her father's home, her ears listened with delight and pleasure to the ever reverting theme, of Sister Bourgeoys' praise. She soon learned to love the pious nun, and her dearest and most familiar walks, were to the Church of Notre Dame, to the Congregation of Notre

(1) On the day of Sister Bourgeoys' obsequies, as Madam Charly was leaving the church, she made the following remark, to one of the Sisters: "Mr. de Belmont spoke eloquently on our dear Mother Bourgeoys' virtue, but after all, he only repeated, what every one knew; "I could tell from my own experience, things that had never been said." Thereupon, she reverted to the period of her marriage, and to the prophetic spirit, which even then, characterized Sister Bourgeoys, saying, although, she had willingly consented to become the wife of Andrew Charly, still, as the hour drew near, she felt an insurmountable repugnance come over her. "I confided my troubles to Sister Bourgeoys," she added, "and this good Mother, endeavored by every possible means, to change my resolution, and to make me understand, the greatness of this Sacrament, the will of Heaven, &c. "Seeing that my disposition continued the same, she took my hands and said: "Come with me Marie!" Opening the door of her little oratory, she knelt and prayed. I could not do as much. A few moments after, she arose. Taking my two hands in hers, she said, in that tone of persuasiveness, which calms at once: "Marie! God demands this sacrifice. Go, my child and accomplish His holy will. He will bless you, and one day your children will be mine." "While she spoke," adds Madam Charly, "my first inclination came back, a sense of happiness stole over me, and I felt the truth of her words, that God called me to this state of life. She prophesied indeed, for my four daughters, are Sisters of the Congregation." And she might have added, as a grateful remembrance came back to her: "She gave her life, that my child might be spared."



Dame. Ah ! how the young girl loved its humble precincts, how she loved to breathe its pure atmosphere ! She met there, the fair young novice, whose virtues perfumed her path, and won every heart. Miss LeBer, was singularly drawn towards her, and Marie Charly soon gained a complete ascendancy over her youthful affection. Solid virtue, was the basis of this strong friendship. It had been so willed by God, for Marie Charly, was an angel in human guise. Her mission, was to lead this soul to Heaven, but it was only when her lips were sealed by death, that the inspiration given, was understood and heeded. Death is ever sad, but doubly so, when it snatches from us, and embraces in its icy folds, the forms of those we love.

Sister Marie Charly began suddenly to decline, and as her young friend, watched and prayed beside her, she seemed to view in another light, the piety, the patience, the obedience, which marked so beautifully, her last days on earth. She longed to die,—to die,—that she might rest for aye, in the Eternal bosom, and be clasped there in the divine embrace. The thought of Heaven, filled her pure soul, with such unspeakable happiness, that Jane LeBer, was strangely and wonderfully impressed. She too, would live for God alone,—for God, as had lived her dear young friend,—and to consecrate her heart, her whole being, to His love, was now, the sole object of her longing desires. The resolution was renewed and strengthened, as she knelt beside the inanimate form, she had so much prized, and to which, death had seemingly added, new and sweeter charms. The calm, the heavenly expression of mildness, innocence and sanctity, which beautified her fair young face, aroused within the heart of Jane LeBer, feelings of emulation to walk in the footsteps of her departed friend ; to judge from the effects, which this event had produced, one would have supposed, that the deceased had assumed a new life, in the person of Jane LeBer, and that her spirit of consecration to God, and detachment from all earthly things, had indeed been communicated to her friend.

It was almost immediately after this circumstance that Jane

LeBer, took the heroic resolution, of which we have already spoken and which she so nobly executed. Mary Charly's mission was indeed accomplished, and bereaved friends in their moments of deep regret, for the loss of so dear and so gifted a being, could well exclaim :

"The spring shall give us violets back,  
And every flower, but thee."

Some years later, in 1686, a second Sister entered the novitiate of the Congregation. This was Catherine Charly de Saint-Ange, of the Blessed Sacrement. Three years later, in 1689, Mary-Ann Charly de Saint-Ange, followed in their footsteps. She bore the name of the Nativity. and like unto her elder Sister, she gently passed from earth to Heaven, shedding around her perfume and gladness. At the age of twenty, she rejoined her angelic Sister Marie. This event marked 1692. A fourth Sister, Elizabeth Charly de Saint-Ange, came to the Congregation, in 1696. She bore the name of Saint Frances, and shared the labors of the institution, for the space of seventeen years. She died in 1713, in her fiftieth year.

Let us now return, dear reader, to Sister Catherine Charly, the heroine of Sister Bourgeoys' noble sacrifice. She was born the 30th May, 1665, and received the name of Catherine, from her godmother, Catherine Legardeur, wife of Charles d'Ailleboust des Musseaux, later, Governor of Ville-Marie. Confided to Sister Bourgeoys' care, from her most tender years, she was formed at this early age, to the practices of solid piety, and consecrated her young heart to God, ere the deceits and cares of life, had beguiled its innocence. In the census of 1681, she was numbered among the sisters of the Congregation, being then in her fifteenth year. The virtues and rare qualities conspicuous in this young sister, won for her, the most important functions of her community, at a still early age. In the elections made during the year 1693, we hear her proclaimed Mother Assistant, in 1698, Mistress of the Novitiate, and finally in 1708, she is presented to us as the fourth Superior of the Congregation. Margaret Bourgeoys had not been deceived,

in the estimate, she had formed of Sister Charly's virtues, and her rare qualities of mind and heart. Hardly had she assumed the reins of government, when arose that violent storm, against the Congregation, relative to the simple vows which had been prescribed, for the sisters in 1698. We have already remarked, that several attempts had been made, to engage the sisters, either to join the Ursuline Order, or else embrace the cloister, and how these attempts failed. The sisters of the Congregation, could not accede to these demands, without contradicting the designs of Heaven, upon their institution. Sister Bourgeoys had received a special mission, and to accomplish this mission, special graces were given, and special virtues demanded in return. The governor and other principal officers of Ville-Marie, who had been eyewitnesses, to the immense advantages reaped by the colony, from Sister Bourgeoys' institution, had always been averse to these proceedings, and in consequence, wrote to the minister at court, and requested that these tentatives, so painful to the sisters of the Congregation, and to themselves, might not be renewed. It is not our intention, to enter into these details ; we have simply mentioned them, so as to prove Sister Bourgeoys' keen spirit of discernment, in choosing those, who were to preside over the future of her Congregation ; and it is to be observed, that in this, as in numerous other circumstances, she evinced extraordinary penetration. " Sister Charly," remarks one of Sister Bourgeoys' biographers, " seemed " to have been elevated to the superiority, only to give proofs, " as it were, of the rare capacity, and the wisdom, with which " Heaven had endowed her. Under her mild and judicious " administration, the Congregation prospered, despite storms " and difficulties, and the troubles that had occasioned so many " anxieties and cares, proved later, that they were indeed, " ' blessings in disguise.' " Some years after the death of the foundress of the Congregation, the sisters, were desirous of possessing a written memorial of her virtues, that they might bequeath to her future children ; Mr. Glandelet, Vicar General of Quebec, a zealous and devoted friend to the sisters of the Congregation, offered to render them this service, in answer to Sister

Charly's request. We extract the following letter, from the annals of the Congregation, written by Sister Charly, upon receiving the precious manuscript.

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CONGREGATION OF NOTRE DAME,

Ville-Marie, November 12th, 1711.

*Reverend Sir,*

Allow me to acknowledge the reception of your case, containing the memoirs and the life of our dear sainted mother, Margaret Bourgeoys, to which you kindly added a letter, addressed to me, with the necessary instructions, for writing this life. I have placed the entire parcel, in the hands of our Mother Superior, who will see that it is copied, according to your desires. Permit me, dear Sir, and most honored father, to offer you the tribute of my own grateful feelings, for the extreme kindness, and the trouble you have given yourself, to complete this work. Your labor, has caused inexpressible joy, to every member of our community; and we shall hold your kind office, in eternal remembrance. Our revered mother gave up her life, gladly to preserve mine. I consider myself most fortunate, and feel consoled, when I think, that I contributed towards the composition of her life, by the humble demand which I made you, some years ago. You were kind enough to realize my wishes, and thus, my most honored father, thanks to you, we have the advantage of seeing her live again, in this recital of her virtues. May her example spur us on, to deeds of godliness, to deeds like unto hers. Obtain, by your prayers, this grace for us all, and for me in particular.

I remain, with the most profound respect, and lasting sentiments of gratitude, Sir, and most honored father,

~~Yours~~

Your humble and obedient servant,

SISTER OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

A lapse of nineteen years, since Margaret Bourgeoys' holocaustic prayer, had been uttered; Sister Charly had accomplished the mission given, when she came back to life, and now, trusting in the promises of her God and Redeemer, she prepares for her last earthly pilgrimage.

Every year on the 25th of January, our family necrology, pays the following tribute to her memory.

Died, this 25th of January, 1719, while fulfilling for the second time, the functions of the Superiority, our beloved and honored Sister Catherine Charly de Saint Ange, of the Blessed Sacrament. This worthy Sister, owed the preservation of her life, to our illustrious foundress, who offered herself to God, that she might be saved. Through gratitude for her benefactress, she assumed her religious name, (of the Blessed Sacrament). Endowed with superior talent and remarkable virtue, she rendered many important services to our Congregation, in the different offices of Mistress of the Novices, Assistant and Superior.

She died at the age of fifty two, having devoted forty years of her life, to the service of God, in the Congregation of Notre Dame.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIFTH.

Sister LeBer's last year on earth.—How perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, commenced at the Congregation.—The holy Angels assisted the pious recluse at all times. The prudent and wise plans, which she formed for the instruction of young persons.—Closing scenes of an angelic life.—Obsequies.—Her last visit to Notre Dame.—Sister LeBer's cell.—Our Lady of Pity.—The miraculous statue of Our Lady of Pity.—Eulogium, pronounced by Mr. de Belmont, the 3rd of October, 1714.

The last year of Sister LeBer's life on earth is not a tale, that every hour brings with it; not that its progress, was marked by any extraordinary event, no, but simply, because it was the last. She died as she had lived, united to God, by prayer, mortification and sacrifice; a pure being, elevated above this earthly sphere, as a host mediatrix, between Heaven and earth. We have referred to her heroic virtues, too often, dear reader, to allow the closing scenes of her life, to pass by, unnoticed. The motive which led her to embrace a secluded life, in Sister Bourgeoys' institution, was the death of an angelic Sister, to whom she was most tenderly attached, and whose last moments were marked by such beauty, and such hopeful peace, that their remembrance alone, broke the last feeble ties, that bound her to the world. "May my soul die the death of the just," she cried, "and my last hour be like unto hers." This was her unceasing prayer. No one loved Sister Bourgeoys, more than Jane LeBer; when the pious foundress had left this world for a better, it was particularly, in favor of her loved Congregation, that Sister LeBer manifested her affection, by a generous and boundless solicitude. Not satisfied with offering in its behalf her orisons, her austerities, and the merits of her angelic life, she drew down upon it, the most precious graces, in founding the Perpetual Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, for every hour of the day; Sister LeBer felt that the hour of her pilgrimage, was drawing to a

close, and she wished that the Congregation, should continue her life of love and adoration before the holy Tabernacle, when her soul should be before the Eternal, in the courts of Heaven. The Sisters granted her request, and from the moment of her death, until this very hour, from the first rays of the morning, until dark night, there is always a Sister in adoration before the Altar, in behalf of the community. After Mr. LeBer's death, his daughter wished to lay aside all claims to inheritance, in favor of the Congregation. When Sister Bourgeoys, first laid the foundations of her community, she little thought, it would increase so rapidly. We remember the tender interest and motherly solicitude that marked her last hours, when she laid out plans for her children's comfort, ere she left them, and told them to trust in Providence, for the necessary means to carry out the undertaking. Sister LeBer, had heard of this recommendation, and her generous heart, yearned to realize her revered friend's dying wish. Thirteen years had elapsed since then, and many unfavorable circumstances had prevented the accomplishment, of her praise worthy designs. But this year, 1714, brought with it, a presentiment of death, and she hastened to fulfil her resolution. After recommending the matter to God, she commenced by laying aside a sum, for the education of a certain number of young persons ; then, as if inspired, she requested the Sisters to commence at once, the erection of their new building. Sister Saint Joseph, who had the management of temporal affairs, obtained permission to converse with Sister LeBer on this subject. She says : " Sister LeBer expresses a most ardent desire, to have the work commenced, assuring me that such was the will of God, and that the holy Angels would surely assist us." She added : " That if we did not hasten with our preparations, we would lose the opportunity of doing so. She spoke in a tone so persuasive and so inspired, that we really feared to delay, and set to work at once." The foundations were soon laid, and Mr. de Belmont, of Saint Sulpice, blessed the corner stone on the 28th of May, 1713.

The edifice was dedicated to Mary, Queen of Angels.



The following prayer, placed in the foundations, is a most edifying memorial, of the piety and confidence which animated our heroine and the worthy daughters of Margaret Bourgeoys :

"Holy Virgin, Queen of Angels, Refuge of all mankind, vouchsafe to grant us the protection, we most humbly implore, for the beginning and the completion of this edifice, which we have undertaken, in compliance with our venerable Mother's request. It is our most earnest desire, that it may contribute to the glory of thy Divine Son, and to thy greater honor. Watch over it, oh ! Immaculate Mary, so that mortal sin may never enter, beneath its roof. Send guardian spirits, to protect, and to increase our devotion towards thee, so that all its inmates may revere thee, as their guide, their Mother and their Queen." "Whenever the Sisters mentioned their fears, relative to their limited resources, Sister LeBer would say "Oh ! we will ask the Angels to take charge of the undertaking, they will supply us, with all that is requisite," and indeed, adds Sister Saint Joseph, "we had many striking proofs, that the holy angels, answered Sister LeBer's prayer. The few workmen we had were themselves surprised at the rapid progress of the work, and from this, the report spread, "that the men worked during the day, and the holy angels during the night ; this saying "was not confined to Ville-Marie alone." Mother Juchereau, wrote the same thing from Quebec, and thus confirmed the pious belief, that Sister LeBer was really assisted, by these celestial spirits. She says : "The holy angels assist the pious recluse in many ways ; she is wont to converse with them, and undoubtedly, they take great pleasure, in communicating with this angelic creature." Sister Saint Joseph mentions an instance of her simplicity and confidence. "One day, Sister LeBer requested me to send her, a workman to repair her spinning wheel. I forgot to do so at the time, and went afterwards to apologize for my neglect, adding that I would atone for my fault, by immediately complying with her request, she smiled and answered : "Oh ! it is all right now, the good angels mended my wheel, they come to me in all

“ my difficulties ; trust in their help, and you will surmount every obstacle.” As the construction of the new building was commenced at Sister LeBer’s request ; this same Sister, who directed the workmen tried to prevail upon her, to visit at least the building. She had never consented to see the plan, nor did she know on what precise spot, the edifice was erected, although she heard the men working daily, and might have seen all, without leaving her cell. She answered with her usual mildness : “ Oh ! I do not think, that my presence is necessary, but I shall see about it.” Sister Saint Joseph understood, and said nothing more. When the construction was completed, Sister LeBer accomplished her pious resolution. Putting together, all that remained of her fortune, she disposed of all, the 9th of September 1714. Her intentions are expressed, in the following act of donation.

“ Convinced, that I cannot devote the remainder of my property, to a better use, or in a manner more conformable to God’s glory. I will, that henceforth, my revenue be devoted to the education of young girls, whose parents have not the means of providing for their instruction. The Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame whose lives are a source of edification to all, and whose zealous efforts have had so many happy results, have been chosen to carry out this design. I am assured in advance, that my fondest desires will be perfectly realized.” Sister LeBer was well aware that the Sisters of the Congregation, were qualified by their special vocation, for the instruction of youth. Still, she understood, that all should not receive the same degree of education, and expressed her views, in consequence. “ It is the donor’s wish, that these young girls, should dwell in the convent as boarders, and learn there, all that is requisite to become good and fervent christians. Besides their religious duties, they must be taught all sorts of useful work, to make, wash and repair their clothes. They will help in the kitchen every week, and thus be trained, to the practice of true humility.” By this arrangement, Sister LeBer, gave striking proofs of her wisdom and benevolence, and evinced, that she really sought

the welfare of those, who depended upon her bounty. It was her wish, that they should be spared the unhappiness, attendant upon a different plan of education. "It is well known," writes one of her biographers, "how many evils followed, from the system established in the famous institution of Saint Cyr, founded by Madame de Maintenon, for young girls of high leniage, but in reduced circumstances. The brilliant education, they there received, rendered them unfit, for the humble position they were called upon to occupy, and exposed them besides, to many dangers, and to much unhappiness. This evil," he continues, "was removed by a gentleman of Saint Sulpice, Mr. Languet de Gergy, who established a house in his parish, which bore the name of *Saint Enfant Jésus*. There, noble, but poor girls, were received, and were brought up, on a plan, similar to that made choice of, by Sister LeBer. This means, enabled them, to fill respectable positions in the world, thus ensuring their temporal and eternal happiness. Society at large, has so many duties to perform, that it needs individuals suited to its different positions. Who would accuse Cardinal Richelieu of not having promoted public weal throughout France? Yet, this great statesman, resolved to abolish petty colleges, because, instead of contributing to the good of the country, they led most of the rising generation, to embrace high professions, when God called them to embrace mechanical pursuits, and that social disturbances, were not unfrequently, the result of such an education."

Sister LeBer's plan, was then sanctioned by Mr. de Belmont, and intimated to the Sisters of the Congregation. This act of donation, was accepted and signed, the 9th of September, 1714. It was the crowning act of her benevolence, for the pious recluse was soon to receive her eternal recompense. Still, notwithstanding her naturally weak and delicate constitution, she never deviated from the austere mode of life, she had prescribed for herself. The last twenty years of her existence were spent in mortification, lengthened prayer, constant work and interior trials of a most painful nature. No relaxation however,

was given to her poor frame, until one night, when the cold completely overpowered her, while she was in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Ah! dear reader, does not this most heroic act, one of the last of a most heroic life, condemn our inordinate love of comfort, our indifference, our lukewarmness, when present before His Tabernacle? This pure being, had vowed her existence to His love, and it was there, before the shrine of all her hopes, of all her desires, in the dead hour of night, that she fell exhausted, powerless, in His presence. It was time for her to go to Him, love had burst its earthly capacities!

The cross is heavy Father! I have borne  
It long, and still do bear it. Let my worn  
And fainting spirit, rise to that bright land,  
Where crowns are given. Father take my hand.

This last effort, to prove her love to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, brought on the illness, which was to terminate her life. She took her bed, and it was only, when an imperious command was given, that she consented to lie on a mattress and make use of bed linen. It was the first time, that she indulged in such luxuries, since she entered the Congregation of Notre Dame.

Sickness was not to her a source of uneasiness, nor did it cause her to forget her cherished community. Calling to mind at this moment, that she had not specified, in her will, who was to inherit the scanty furniture, of her humble abode, she sent for a notary, and bequeathed all that remained, to the sisters of the Congregation, adding, "that no one was to deprive them of these articles," proving by these words, that she did not wish them to have any difficulty, after her death. This was her last look, to things of earth. Then, it was, that those around her, became eyewitnesses to that spirit of mortification, which had so long animated her. A raging fever, burned within, yet she never asked for a drop of water, to moisten her parched lips. She lay there, a voluntary victim, upon the altar of the cross. When her fearful coughing spells came on, she made the great-

est effort to repress them, through reverence for the Divine Lover of souls, who dwelt beside her. She grew worse hourly. The sisters hastened to her cell, anxious to look upon one, whose life had been a continued miracle. This privilege could not be refused. They came, ere her eyes were closed in death ; her countenance seemed enshrined, in a halo of celestial light. She saw them not, for her soul was all absorbed in love divine. No tongue may tell, what was passing then, between this pure victim and her God. It was something, perchance, like those mysterious heavenly whispers, that ravished the soul of the beloved disciple, when he reclined at that last memorable supper, upon the Sacred Heart of his Divine Lord ; or else, something akin to the silvery echoes, that floated around Magdalena's ears, upon that glorious morn of the Resurrection, when that one word, " Maria," filled her inmost being, with new thrills of love, of love unutterable. Perhaps this same sweetness was now rejoicing her inward ear, giving her, in these last earthly moments, a foretaste of heavenly bliss. None of her pious exercises were omitted, and when her strength failed, Sister Annie Barroy, now Saint-Charles, recited aloud her long vocal prayers, and thus enabled the dying recluse, to join in spirit. Unable to kneel, as was her wont, before the Tabernacle, she would send her cousin, from time to time, to meditate in her place, and requested the same favor from the sisters, when they came to replace Saint-Charles. Two days previous to her death, she willed, that her body should be interred in the church of the Congregation, giving the sisters, a last proof of her affection, and of her confidence in their prayers. (1) Death could not part her, from the pious souls she had so fondly, and so truly loved, and to whom she felt herself indebted after God, for the grace of her special vocation. Fearing that after her death, her relatives might refuse to comply with her request, she wrote an act, from which we extract the following :

(1) When dying, Miss LeBer's father requested, that his remains should be interred in the church of the Congregation, that death might bring him nearer to his darling child, and give him a place of rest, in the same spot, where she herself would one day repose. His desires were accomplished, and his funeral service was celebrated, just beside her cell, while upon her ear, fell the last prayers and chants of the sad *Requiem*.

"Miss Jane LeBer, recluse in the convent of the Congregation of Notre Dame, reflecting upon the short time that remains to end her earthly career, having disposed of the temporal possessions, which God had so kindly bestowed upon her, has now resolved to make known her last earthly desire.

"In the name of the Father, &c.

"As a Christian and a Catholic, she recommends her soul to God, and begs that He will admit her, into His heavenly kingdom, through the merits of the passion and death of His Divine Son. To obtain eternal happiness, she solicits the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of Saint Michael, of Saint John the Evangelist, of her holy patrons, and of the Saints in Heaven. Secondly, she wills, that after her death, her body be interred, beside that of her father, in the church belonging to the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Charles Lemoyne, Baron of Longueuil, whom she has appointed her executor, will see that her request is faithfully complied with."

"(Signed,) JANE LEBER."

This testamentary act, was dictated during the afternoon of the first day of October, and though extremely weak, Sister LeBer made an effort and signed the document. The following day, led on by her fervor, she thought she might say some of her accustomed prayers, and asked for a book, to recite the office of the Holy Cross. Hardly, had she taken a sitting posture, when a sudden dizziness came over her, and such utter prostration followed, that it was considered best, to administer the last solemn rites of the church. The Blessed Sacrament was carried to her cell, in a most impressive manner, all the sisters assisting, each one bearing a lighted taper. A few only entered, and witnessed the ceremony of her last communion. It was the second of October, the festival of the Holy Angels. Her sufferings were little thought of, when Jesus had entered her heart; she desired to have her curtains drawn, so that no earthly sight, might disturb her, and with the calm

and serene courage of a saint, she immolated her life, to God's greater glory.

"She gave Him all her love,  
Like a flower, that flings its perfume  
To the breeze."

Life was waning fast. At two o'clock in the morning, she fell into a gentle agony. Her captive soul, so long retained, burst its fetters at nine o'clock, the 3rd October, 1714, and was ushered, we fondly trust, by an escort of angelic spirits, who placed her at the feet of the Eternal. Behold thy God! thy everlasting recompense. She is reunited now, for aye, to all those she had so fondly loved, here below. Peace be thine Jane LeBer! peace, that follows the hard fought battle, and the dearly earned victory. After this edifying death, the Sisters hastened to testify their esteem and their veneration, for the departed. Their first care was, to lay her out in her usual garments, so as to satisfy their own devotion, and that of the entire city; but her dress was so old and worn, that in order to clothe her with becoming decency, another had to be made. Death did not give her features, the repulsive expression it so often imparts. Hers was the same sweet look of candor, mildness and innocence, that had given so much beauty to her face, during life. No one wearied, gazing on her angelic features, and all sighed to share the happiness, which they felt, she now enjoyed. Her body was thus exposed for two days, to the veneration of the faithful. Multitudes assembled to witness the novel scene, to look upon one whom they knew not, though she had lived and died in their midst. Mother Juchereau writes from her cloister: "After Sister LeBer's death, her remains were placed in state, in the church of the Congregation, her face uncovered, so as to satisfy the people's devotion. Crowds came to behold her; her tattered garments, and even her old straw shoes, became objects of veneration, and it has been affirmed that the faith of many, was recompensed on this occasion."

The people satisfied, her magnificent obsequies followed.



The body was borne to the Parish Church of Notre Dame, to that church she had loved so well, and from whose solemn and impressive ceremonies, she had so willingly exiled herself. A grand funeral service was celebrated, and M<sup>r</sup>. de Belmont, of Saint-Sulpice, pronounced a touching panegyric, on the virtues of the deceased. Her remains were then brought back to the Congregation, and interred beside those of her father. Respect for her, whose mortal deposit they possessed, as well as gratitude, for the numberless favors, she had conferred upon their institution, induced the Sisters to have the following inscription, written in golden letters, placed upon her tomb.

"Here lies the Venerable Sister Jane LeBer, benefactress of this institution. Having led a retired life in her father's house, for the space of fifteen years, she came to this convent, and in this chosen retreat, spent the last twenty years of her existence. She departed this life, in the fifty-third year of her age, on the 3rd October, 1714. May eternal bliss be her portion, in the realms of everlasting peace."

"Thus far removed, and now transplanted flower!  
Exposed no more to blast or tempest rude,  
Sheltered with tenderest care from frost or shower,  
And each rough season's cold vicissitude.  
Now, may thy form in bowers of peace, assume  
Immortal fragrance, and unwithering bloom."

(HEMANS.)

We extract from a letter, written by Sister Saint Joseph, to a distinguished Ecclesiastic of Quebec.

"We have just returned from Sister LeBer's funeral service. I can assure you, that this ceremony, so sad in appearance, has nevertheless, awakened feelings similar to those, that one would have experienced, at the close of a grand and solemn mass of thanksgiving, in honor of some great saint. In all probability, the souls in Purgatory, have had all the benefit, for we cannot believe, that she kept them company, for even one instant. I have always regretted that you did not know her.

"When we approach her tomb, we are spell-bound, in the same way, as when we pray before the heart of our venerable Mother Bourgeoys. We shall, no doubt, receive before these two home altars, special assistance for both body and soul. Several persons have already made this same remark, and I can surely add my testimony to theirs."

After Sister LeBer's death, her appartments, as well as the little furniture they contained, were considered as precious relics. Those who repaired to her tomb, loved also to visit her cell, with feelings of respect and devotion. In 1768, the convent of the Congregation was destroyed by fire, and no trace of Sister LeBer's cell was left. A new church was subsequently raised upon the old foundations, the space formerly occupied by the heroic recluse, was added to the church, and became its sanctuary. A number of years later, this second church was demolished, and a more spacious one erected in its place. The beautiful little church of "Our Lady of Pity," built in the grecian style of architecture, stands on the same sit, where Margaret Bourgeoys and Jane LeBer, jected, the first church of the Congregation. A monumental slab on the right, marks the place, where the remains of the recluse were deposited.

When her coffin was opened, in 1822, after a lapse of one hundred and eight years, it was found to contain a heap of pearly white dust, only. This entire dissolution, was attributed to Sister LeBer's delicate constitution, and austere mode of living. The centre of the new church, is the favored spot, where she spent the last twenty years of her life. "There, says Mr. de Belmont, she dwelt as a public victim, offering herself in sacrifice to God, to obtain His choicest blessings upon her fellow citizens, and desiring above all things the sanctification of youth." The little church that now stands as a record of the past, is enriched with a miraculous statue, representing "Our Lady of Pity." The object of special honor for several centuries in France, it has been the source of manifold blessings in the New World. Time had considerably weakened recollections of the heroic

recluse, but God willed not, that the ground, sacred with so many hallowed remembrances, should share the fate of earth's transitory things. Hence the treasure so miraculously obtained, has been the means of drawing hither, crowds who witness daily, new manifestations of God's love and infinite power. "Montreal," it has been truly said, "enjoys a celebrity of its own," so many events religious and instructive, are connected with its foundation.

Consecrated in a special manner, to the Queen of Heaven, it is not surprising, that devotion to our Blessed Lady, should be conspicuous, among the religious acts of its inhabitants. Two sanctuaries were erected in honor of their heavenly Mother, by the Sisters of the Congregation: Notre Dame de Bonsecours, of which we have already spoken, and the Church of our "Lady of Pity." The miraculous statue, was venerated as far back as the year 1362, in the Cathedral Chapel of Didier, in the city of Avignon,—city, rich in religious remembrances, and remarkable as having been at different times, the sojourn of the Popes. One of the Cardinal Bishops, who resided there, under Pope Innocent the VI, by name Bertrand Dentis, fell dangerously ill, in October, 1355. It was this good man's wish, that the Church of Saint Didier, should be rebuilt upon another plan, and erected into a Collegiate. His pious wishes were ratified by the Pope, and in consequence, the Church was dedicated the 24th of May, 1359. The generosity and the piety of the Cardinal founder, was a source of edification to all. Many opulent families, came in their turn, to contribute to the good work. Among them, was a noble and pious Italian priest, descended from the illustrious family of the Counts of Retrochini. Singularly devout to the Mother of God, he constructed a chapel in honor of Our Lady of Pity, assisted by his pious mother, the Countess of Foligni. Heaven was pleased to favor the people's devotion, by a number of miracles, which attached wonderful veneration to the spot.

Then came the revolution of 1793, and the heart rending disasters, which marked its passage, when religion was cast

aside, when its institutions were demolished and its temples desecrated, by impious hands. The Church of Saint Didier, was divested, not only of its exterior beauty, but of every mark of piety and veneration. The costly works of art, that embellished the church, were stolen or destroyed, or else heaped together in one of the public squares, to be sold for fire wood. A pious lady, who had witnessed this sad spectacle, bought the pile, which contained the precious statue ; her stratagem, saved the relic.

A devout member of Saint Didier's Church, whose devotion had often led him to invoke " Our Lady of Pity," left at his death, a considerable sum, destined to ornament the church, in which the statue was placed. His desires were accomplished by one of his nephews, Mr. Fabris, of Saint Sulpice. Extremely devout to the sorrows of Mary, he not only employed the sum left by his uncle, but expended much more, in the construction of a magnificent niche, destined to receive the statue. When all was finished, there was so great a disproportion between the niche and the statue, that it was thought advisable, to procure another of larger dimensions. This was done ; beautifully sculptured and portraying most perfectly, the dolors of Mary, the new statue soon won the admiration of those, who gazed upon it. Consequently, the removal of the original excited neither murmur nor contest. Later, it was presented to Mr. Fabris, as a token of gratitude and remained in his possession, until circumstances procured him the means of sacrificing, for God's honor and glory, the precious image that had been venerated for ages, in the antique church of Saint Didier. To the New World ; came Our Mother of Sorrows, another people in a stranger clime, were now to pay her homage.

In the year 1852, the Sisters of the Congregation, tested the truth of this proverb : " God chastens those whom He loveth." Extremely afflicted, by the premature loss of fifteen promising members of their community, a gentleman of Saint Sulpice, who evinced a deep and sincere interest in Sister Bourgeoys' institution, was inspired to procure them some consolation, in

this trying circumstance ; accordingly, he requested Mr. Fabris, with whom he was intimately acquainted, to allow the statue, to pass into their hands. This favor was refused. Two years later, the demand was renewed, in more pressing terms. God blessed the pious intentions of the pleader, and touched the proprietor's heart, so deeply, that the statue was forthwith sacrificed ; orders were given for its safe removal to Canada. It was in this manner, that the miraculous statue became the property, the treasure and the consolation of the Sisters of the Congregation.

Before closing this chapter, dear reader, we will give you an extract from the funeral oration, delivered by Mr. de Belmont, of Saint Sulpice, on the occasion of Sister LeBer's obsequies. It will prove to you, the high opinion, which all entertained for the heroic Sister's virtue. Perchance, its perusal will awaken feelings of emulation, within young hearts, as it did, on that memorable 5th of October 1714.

*" Tu honorificientia populi nostri."*

*" You are the honor of our people."*

*" Sisters,—Our prayers have been offered up, for the illustrious Virgin, whose loss we so keenly feel ; but gratitude exacts, that a public testimonial, should honor one, who was the pride of the Church, and the glory of her country. Her virtuous examples have found an echo in every heart, they have drawn down the favors of the Most High, on numerous souls, and many a christian Virgin here present, is indebted to Sister LeBer, for her calling. The prayers of the pious recluse, have shielded us from wars and from plagues, and we are in duty bound, to hail her advent to the world of bliss. with the note of praise and the song of triumph. This extraordinary and edifying life is an honor to our city ; it will encircle our age, with the bright halo, which illumined the history of the first centuries of the Church, and the New World, will then acquire preeminence, over the homes of our fore-fathers. I can safely say, that the Christendom can scarcely boast of another angelic being, like unto the young girl, who reproduced the virtues,*

" which the most austere anchorites had practiced. Our corrupt  
" age, is destitute of such heroism. Entire seclusion is the most  
" striking feature in her existence, and should first elicit our  
" admiration, let us then dwell on this alone, and compare it to  
" that, which the ancient solitaries embraced. Let us for a mo-  
" ment, forget her spotless purity and child-like innocence, her  
" forgetfulness of self and benevolence towards others, to me-  
" ditate solely on that solitude, which rendered her the wonder  
" of our age, and elevated her to so high a degree of sanctity.  
" Man is by nature, a sociable being ; hence a solitary life has  
" always been considered as the greatest triumph of grace over  
" nature, and the summit of christian perfection. Read the lives  
" of the Fathers of the desert, you will see there, anchorites  
" compared to sublime angels, who chant unceasingly the praises  
" of the Almighty, or to Enoch and Elias' dwelling, in an ethereal  
" region, free from vicissitudes, and whose existence is a con-  
" tinued contemplation.

" Such then was the sublime life, to which our recluse was  
" called. To prove her heroism, we shall draw a comparison,  
" between her and world renowned solitaries ; rock and thicket  
" need not impede our course, nor baffle our researches. Ask  
" him who has assumed the hermit's garb, why he lives iso-  
" lated from the world ; his answer is, that the bright days of  
" his youth were spent in sin and in the forgetfulness of his  
" God, he has sought the forest's depths, to atone for many  
" years of crime. Our recluse entered her cell, with a heart as  
" pure and spotless, as the Babe upon whose brow, the rege-  
" rating waters of Baptism still glisten ; she followed the Lamb  
" into the closed garden, still retaining the spotless garb, His  
" blood had purified. Purity, shone upon her brow, and fairest  
" lillies bloomed around her, for earth had never breathed  
" upon them, nor had passion polluted them. History seldom  
" mentions young girls, who dwelt in solitude, and though it  
" alludes to some, like a Magdalen, a Mary of Egypt dwelling  
" in the darkest forests, it also informs us, that it was in atone-  
" ment for sin. Here we behold a follower of the loving Mag-  
" dalen, fondly pursuing Jesus, and drinking in the inebriating

“nectar of His life giving words, but not of worldly Magdalen,  
“seeking earths transient joys, and pleasures. Here too we  
“can admire, that of which antiquity can seldom boast ; the  
“rare union of mortification and of innocence, of spiritual  
“strength and bodily weakness.

“Let us follow up the comparison. Trappists and Carthu-  
“sians, dwell in retirement ; yet, they daily meet, and unite  
“in hymns of praise and love to the Most High. Exercise  
“and manual labor, are some relaxation, from a continued  
“mental strain ; but our solitary, dwelt in a narrow chamber,  
“and refused herself, even the satisfaction of contemplating  
“the firmament. History tells us of a fervent hermit, who had  
“willingly chained himself to a small space ; he at least could  
“look upon the sky, but Sister LeBer's gaze greeted only  
“the walls of her cell. Perseverance, may be deemed heroic,  
“when it leads human nature, to accomplish such acts ; but it  
“would inflict unsupportable torments, if a longing for eternity,  
“a belief in happiness beyond the grave, did not compensate  
“a soul, for these sacrifices.

“The most austere solitaires, spoke of God's mercy and of  
“His works, whilst you, O thrice blessed soul never gave vent  
“to your feelings, and seemed to dread the use of language.  
“When you expressed your thoughts, it was in a lowly spirit,  
“like Jesus of Nazareth.

“This perpetual silence, is the acknowledged feature of the  
“strong minded woman, but where shall we find her ? Shall we  
“seek her in distant lands. Brethren, our own city has pro-  
“duced her. Yes, this life, a continued miracle, was spent in  
“our infant church, on our Virgin Soll. Will the Almighty  
“renew this prodigy and call some other favored soul, to walk  
“in her footsteps ? Alas ! what hopes can we entertain. We  
“must not however, bestow fruitless admiration upon these  
“sublime and heroic virtues, though far above ordinary merit,  
“they can surely give rise to happier results, for though she  
“endeavored to lead a hidden life, some bright rays, have  
“pierced this voluntary obscurity. We can now enter the hum-  
“ble abode, wherein she dwelt for years, and interrogate those



"walls, sole witnesses to her angelic life, there, we can discern traces of virtue, that all may imitate. Antidotes to vice and the means to overcome it.

"Her devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, her profound religion, and the ardent zeal that led her to decorate Our Lord's earthly dwelling, her faithful imitation of Our Blessed Lady's life in the temple, her devotion to the Angels, and her efforts to imitate them, by constant prayer. There too, we learn her love of poverty, simplicity, and humility; and, if we would seek fuller information, let us ask it of Jesus—in His Sacrament of love, of Mary her protectress, and of the angelic spirits, who willingly hovered around her.

"Her cell was so constructed, as to place her bed in close proximity to the Blessed Sacrament; four inches only, intervened between her dwelling, and that of her heart's beloved. She thus, nightly, enjoyed the privilege, once granted to the beloved disciple, when he rested upon his Saviour's bosom. What heavenly communication she must have here received, when her heart found life and light in Him, who illumined the universe. He said perchance to her, as He once said to Jacob.

"This land where you rest, will one day become your inheritance."

"Here we may give full scope to our imagination and yet, we can never fathom, the love out-poured in these communications. O Jesus! concealed neath the sacramental veils, be Thou our guide and our instructor, tell us what passed between Thee and Thy chosen spouse. Did'st Thou not charm her ear with the most delightful strains? Did not Thy voice pierce the slight separation and whisper, in the words of the Canticle, 'Open to me, my Sister, my Spouse open to me.' How often, upon awaking from her sleep, did she say within herself. 'Behold! He standeth behind our wall, looking through the lattices, I sleep, and my heart watches.' Oh heavenly communications! Oh created love! how empty are earthly joys, compared to thy celestial delights! Angelic spirits! have ye not witnessed these loving

“raptures, with admiration? Did not thoughts of sacred emulation, arise within you? But what do I say? Comparisons only diminish, the glory of those actions, which will one day be revealed to the world, in undimmed splendor. Let us now revert to well-known facts. She followed the custom, adopted by the Franciscans, and other religious orders. She rose every night, and spent an hour on her knees, in silent adoration, before the Blessed Sacrament, while darkness reigned and all were wrapt in slumber, rendering no homage to the Most High; this incomparable Virgin, stood forth, as the church's advocate, and her country's shield. During twenty years, the frosts of Canada never caused her, to give up this act of adoration, still the cold was keenly felt, by her, whose emaciated body, had been the victim of so many penitential acts. O Jesus! Lover of crucified souls! Thou wast pleased to choose this pious practice, as the instrument of her martyrdom. Death met her, during those protracted night meditations. Thou didst immolate her, on the altar steps, as a victim, which thou hadst chosen. During twenty years, she burned before Thy Tabernacle, like a bright lamp. Thou hast now extinguished the light, which emanated from her mortal heart, to enkindle new flames in her beatified spirit, and make it shine forth, as a bright luminary, in our western church.

“Here, perhaps, we might revert to the numerous mortifications, which her love induced her to practice; but, who can unfold those secrets? Who can tell, how she macerated her body? The silent walls of her cell, alone witnessed all. O Virgin! blessed Mother of Jesus, tell us, wherein Jane LeBer most copied Thee. Thou didst seek solitude, within the temple's shade, and during twelve years, thou alone of all the daughters of Juda, didst enjoy the privilege of entering the Holy of Holies. It was in this cell, that thy faithful child, made garments for Jesus, by preparing linen for His altars, and vestments for His ministers; thou didst teach her, to blend gold and silver, to rival nature's works and to inspire others, with a desire to adorn thy Son's dwelling in our

“ midst. You heavenly spirits, who gazed so fondly on this  
“ pure maiden, in whom you beheld, not earth's corruption,  
“ but a mind almost as pure as your own, make known to us,  
“ the treasures she acquired while conversing with you. Was  
“ not heavenly wisdom, the reward she obtained? Was not her  
“ soul imbued with this fundamental rule, 'God in all; he  
“ who possesses Him, has the fulness of felicity; and who  
“ knows Him not, is in the most abject poverty.' Did she not  
“ learn that the intelligent, immortal substance, which we call  
“ soul, is our only treasure? that to save it, no pains can be  
“ too great, no difficulties insurmountable; that an insatiable  
“ love of riches, of honors and pleasures, is the soul's greatest  
“ enemy, on account of its tendency to degrade this spiritual  
“ part of our nature?

“ God had given her the goods of the earth, but she re-  
“ nounced all, to die in poverty. The fruit of her labors,  
“ adorn every altar; every parish, holds dear, some specimen  
“ of her artistic genius. We can never weary admiring her  
“ labors, and the love of poverty displayed in her very clothing.  
“ She wore coarse straw shoes, and such tattered garments,  
“ that after her death, others had to be made, to lay her out  
“ with becoming decency. All this was done to practice  
“ humility, which rendered Canada's wealthiest heiress, the  
“ most destitute maiden in the country. Even if sufficient time  
“ had elapsed since her death, to allow us to speak more at  
“ length, upon her merit, this humility, would conceal all from  
“ our gaze, as it concealed her manifold virtues, during life.  
“ Heroic silence! Thou didst screen this brilliant luminary,  
“ from public sight. Daughters of Ville-Marie! Will despair  
“ of ever imitating this Saintly Virgin, be the only result of  
“ the recital of her heroic life? Why despair? Did she not  
“ dwell in your midst, and inhale the air you daily breathe?  
“ Will the contrast between her fervor and your indifference,  
“ merely give rise to the following thought: 'Sister LeBer was  
“ Saint, but I belong to the world, and have no pretensions to  
“ her sanctity, such is not my lot.'  
“ Stay at least for a moment, the current of your wordly

" thoughts, reflect on the numerous dangers, from which solitude delivered her ; view the fearful loss you daily incur, by condemning yourselves, wilfully, to your present manner of living. She mortified her body, and reduced all her senses to subjection ; she closed her eyes on worldly objects, while your looks wound many a heart, and enkindle many an unhallowed flame. Your immodest dresses, are snares set for pure minds, and are new occasions of sin, for those whom Satan has already conquered. The thorny diadem which rested on the Redeemer's brow, guarded her hearing and banished all frivolous discourses ; but you, daughters of the world, you revel in vain delights, in deceptive flattery, and in the insinuating language of worldlings. Your sense of hearing, is an ever open path, wherein sin glides, with all its abominations ; imprudent words never passed her lips, her tongue was bound down, by perpetual silence, and yours is instrumental in often wounding charity. She voluntarily condemned herself to entire reclusion, and you long for the moment, when liberty will be granted you, and allow you to wander, with inclination for your sole guide. Why forget, that ignorance of the world and of its maxims, is the surest shield of innocence. A feeling of horror is experienced, on beholding a licentious person's death bed. Hell's fire seems to burn around, and the infernal spirits would rob the passive tomb of its prey. But all fear is banished, when a Saint dies, because her death, excites feelings of love, of confidence and devotion. Heaven's light seems reflected upon her countenance, and Angels, hover around her inanimate form. You have witnessed this spectacle in the incomparable Virgin, who lies before you. Mothers and daughters of Ville-Marie, she is your model ; she, it is, whom you should imitate ; God demands, that all should be sanctified in their various states of life, and on the last day, will not the virtues of Canada's heroine, rise up in judgment against you ?

" But let me not intermingle threats with praises. Yes, soul of grace, be thou our advocate.

" Holy Recluse ! whom my heart invokes, and whom I

"would fain salute as a Saint, did the Church allow it, we  
"mourn over our past negligences, we dread the contrast  
"between thy fervor and our luke warmness; pray that the  
"Almighty may render us thy imitators on earth, as we hope  
"to be partakers of thy joy, in the realms of bliss."—*Amen.*

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIXTH.

Reminiscences of Louisbourg.—The city of Plaisance.—Misfortunes of Acadia.—Port Royal.—Louisbourg.—Congregation of Notre Dame.—Renewal of hostilities between France and England.—The siege of Louisbourg.—Transportation.—The trials of exile.—Death of Sister Saint Placidus.—Return to Louisbourg.—How the Sisters trusted in Providence.—July, 1750.—The second siege of Louisbourg.—Death at Sea.—Villie-Marie's sympathy.—The Sisters in France.—Death of Sister Saint Arsenius.—The last of the Louisbourg Sisters.—Sister Saint Vincent.—Louisbourg in 1866.

It is well known, that when peace was established between France and England, by the treaty of Utrecht in 1713, Louis the XIV, then reigning, ceded two old French colonies to the English ; Plaisance and Acadia. The former, had long been the object of English conquest ; its port, rendered considerable, by the abundance of its cod fisheries, was at the same time, an impregnable fort, strongly fortified by nature and by art. An entrance bay, wide enough for the passage of a single vessel, led by a winding route, to a magnificent expanse of water, capable of containing more than two hundred vessels at anchor ; scattered here and there along the coast, were seen the fishermen's modest habitations, rural seats and beautiful gardens, belonging to the resident officers, and around all this, a girle of lofty mountains, displayed its protecting attitude, as if in bold defiance, to those who would have dared, to touch the beautiful valley below. A vast citadel, erected upon the highest summit, looked down from its commanding position, upon the sheet of water spread below, which gave yearly from its blue depths, to France, produce, to the value of four million. Such was Plaisance, when given to the English. Then came Acadia. Poor Acadia ! who has not felt deep emotions of sadness, steal over him, at the very mention of the name. Acadia ! thy misfortunes have been the theme of every tongue. Poets have sung thy sorrows, and transmitted to posterity, in glowing verse, mementoes of thy joys, and of thy woes. Land, first

colonized by the pious Vendéans, "whose warriors went to battle, with the name of Mary, upon their brows, their breasts, and their arms." No marvel, that when their sons crossed the seas, they brought with them, devotion to the Mother of God. They came, even to Cape Breton's wave-crested shores ; there they settled ; there they toiled. Soon the dreary wilderness assumed a cheering aspect, and when the Acadian farmer looked around him, and viewed the vast fields of golden harvest, he felt, that God's benediction had accompanied him to his western home. "There was no poverty, no misery, we are told." All lived together, a perfect type of the primitive faithful. Does not one of our American poets, describe most beautifully, the cheerful life they led? He says :

"Then came the laborers home from the fields, and the sun sank  
Down to his rest, and twilight prevailed. Anon from the belfry  
Slowly, the *Angelus* sounded, and over the roofs of the village,  
Columns of blue smoke, like clouds of incense arising  
From a hundred hearths, the homes of peace and contentment,  
Thus dwelt together in love, these simple Acadian farmers.  
Dwelt, in the love of God, and of man."

'Twas thus they lived. Alas ! that dark clouds and sorrow,  
should steal upon them. 'Twas in the month of mild September,  
when their homes were in all their rich autumnal beauty,  
and golden harvests rolling into their granaries, that the blight  
fell upon them.

Bayonets were flashing in the noon-day sun, and the discordant cries of battle, disturbed their hitherto peaceful shores. 'Twas a direful hour, their churches, houses, all they possessed perished in a single day. All was destroyed in one crimson flame. We cannot read without emotion, the recital of their sad fate, and a tear of commiseration, will fall from our eyes when we see the good and pious Acadians, torn from their homes, from their happy hearths. But all did not finish there, even the soil, which they loved as their own lives, was wrested from them. No, not even will their tearful gaze, be allowed to fall upon it. Vessels await on the shore, to transport them, far from these loved scenes ; and for a last time, they gather



around their heavenly Patroness, "Our Lady of Acadia." See how the love of Mary clings to them, hangs over them like a spell, in the midst of their dire sorrow and bitter tears. Weep on aching hearts, not a tear, not a sigh, will Mary of every sorrow lose. She, too, wept and groaned aloud. "Oh! ye who pass by the way, see if there be sorrow like unto mine." The records of that time, tell us, "that they all knelt around "Our Lady of Acadia," while their faithful pastor offered up, in their behalf, the "August Sacrifice." It was soon over, the mournful procession moved on, through the weeping ranks of distracted wives and mothers, without even the sad consolation of a parting embrace." "The sun went down," says a protestant historian, "and the provincial soldiery stood upon the ground alone, without a foe to subdue, or a population to protect." Poor Acadia! Such were the colonies given to England. To compensate for this two-fold loss, Louis the XIV resolved to colonize other portions of Cape Breton, more commonly called "Port Royal." Three different establishments were accordingly formed and named by the King, Port Toulouse, Port Dauphin and Louisbourg. To this latter post, were transferred the garrison, and many families of Plaisance. Numbers came too from Canada, to settle there; and as the city increased in strength, his Majesty gave orders, in 1718, to surround the place by strong fortifications. A citadel was built, at the enormous expense of 30,000,000 francs, an exorbitant sum for the time. Thirty millions thrown into walls of stone, rendered useless by the vain policy of the French court. Battlements were raised along the sea shore; huge bulwarks took their ranks near by, and the youthful city was in a state of defence. The Recollet Fathers were called, to exercise their vigilant zeal and minister to the faithful, all their spiritual necessities. An hospital was erected for the sick and the needy, in a word, nothing was left undone.

But while the court of France, was watching over the temporal interests of Louisbourg, Bishop de Saint-Vallier was not less solicitous, for its spiritual advancement. Moved at the sight of so many young persons, deprived of the benefit of a

religious instruction, he determined to offer the direction of this mission to the Sisters of the Congregation. They accepted most willingly, and were truly happy, to extend their labors of zeal and love, as far as L'Ile Royale, unmindful of the pains and sacrifices, that might await them there.

Circumstances of a most painful nature, delayed, however, the realization of their ardent desires; and it was only, after having borne several successive crosses, that their prayers were heard, and the way made open to their active charity. These events transpired from May 1727, until the autumn of 1733, God so willed it. It was then, that Sister Margaret Mary Trottier, of Saint Joseph, a worthy nun, of whom we have already spoken, left Canada, for this far off mission, accompanied by two other companions, Sisters Saint Benedict and Saint Arsenius, who were to share her labors. We shall meet them again.

The Sisters were kindly received, according to the king's orders, by Mr. de Saint Ovide and Mr. de Mezy. From these gentlemen, they obtained every mark of protection, and every facility for the foundation and success of their establishment. No sooner were they settled in their new home, than children flocked to them, from all quarters, and in the course of a few weeks, they were compelled to turn to the mother house, for assistance. Two more sisters soon left Ville-Marie for Louisbourg, besides a strong and robust servant girl, to take care of their domestic work. These zealous missionaries, left home gaily, remembering the words of their revered foundress, which she once addressed to a youthful apostle. "Go, my child, and remember, that in instructing youth, you are gathering up the drops of Our Lord's most precious blood, which might otherwise be lost." Encouraged by this thought, they sacrificed generously their beloved community: could they have foreseen the sad disasters, which were to befall them, perchance, a tear would have clouded the smile, which their hopeful zeal and ardor had brought forth. Sisters Saint Placidus and Saint Gertrude, joined the Louisbourg Sisters, and by this means, they were enabled to instruct all the young persons who came to

them. Heaven's benediction was visible. The government officers, and a number of devoted friends, obtained royal favors and royal pensions, and the work went on bravely.

Innocent hearts were taught the devotion to the holy names, they had first learned to lisp; youthful virtues were developped, and all promised a happy future. Alas! it was only a delusive veil, which hope and fond desire, had strewn before their enraptured gaze. God loved the generous, noble-hearted missionaries too well, to allow them to dwell for a length of time, in the joys of calm, peace and prosperity. His eternal wisdom, preordained, that sacrifices are more beneficial to the souls' sanctification, than any effort that can come from ourselves.

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Twelve years had passed away,—again the clash of arms,—again, the cries and shouts of battle, resounded on the hill sides along. This war between England and France, proved most fatal to the city of Louisbourg. The English laid siege to the place, and the unfortunate inhabitants, surrounded by a superior force, capitulated in the month of June, 1746. Many a heart rending scene marked this event. It was a sad hour for all, but doubly painful to the inmates of the Congregation. Their convent was pillaged and destroyed, nothing was left, nothing was respected, not even their linen, and numberless articles; of use only to nuns. In this hour of distress, their children clustered around them, feeling almost secure in presence of their virtue. The sisters could not abandon them; and when orders were given to ascend the french vessels, they went together, teachers and children, to the shores of that France, destined to give them an asylum to-day, later, a grave. We will not endeavour to portray their emotions, as the sails were unfurled, and bore the ships from shore; still sadder thoughts came, as the last glimpse of land disappeared, and they saw themselves exiles, on the bosom of the deep, uncertain of their future, but confident and hopeful in the arms of Providence, "who doeth all things well." Jesus Christ, says Fenelon, "alone knows how to distribute crosses." He knew then, upon whose shoulders, he laid this last heavy one.

After a lapse of two long weary months, the vessels cast anchor, at Rochefort. It was the 25th of August. From there, they were conducted to LaRochelle, and took up their abode in a charitable institution, called Saint Stephen's Hospital. The fearful emotions, which filled their hearts, during the siege of Louisbourg, (1) added to the privations of a long sea voyage, had seriously undermined their health. One of their number, Sister Saint Placidus, was completely mastered by these hardships, her youth and delicate organisation soon gave way ; she declined, like some fair exotic, that is transplanted to a foreign clime ; and one evening, when the sun's farewell rays, had cast their golden hues around her, she murmured gently, Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Ville-Marie, then a smile, a sigh and all was over. For God's sake, for His love, another link was broken, in the chain that bound them to exile and to earth.

It may not be the last. Deprived of friends and of every human aid, the Sisters resolved at last to write to court, in order to obtain assistance. Petition after petition was sent, and finally after these renewed solicitations, the sum of 1040 livres was granted them, to sustain themselves and their children.

At the close of three years, these national disturbances ceased, and things began to wear a less gloomy aspect. Peace was concluded between England and France, by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and Cape Breton was again restored to the French. The exiles, hailed with grateful joy, this dawn of a brighter day. Bishop de Pontbriand, who had succeeded to

(1) Before the desolating period of the siege of Louisbourg, Sister Margaret Trotter of Saint Joseph, who had become quite infirm, was compelled to return to Canada. She was accompanied by one of the Sisters, who was to take charge of her during the journey. A heavy cross fell to the lot of each. Sister Saint Joseph, who yearned to clasp once more, in a fond embrace, the loved ones of Ville-Marie, could only gaze upon Canada in the distance. The sight brought tears to her eyelids, but that was all. A sacrifice must be the crowning act of her zealous holy life. Death put an end to her missionary labors, on board the vessel, as it cast anchor before the island of Orleans. The heroic nun, was seventy one years old, and fifty four of her precious existence, had been consecrated to God, in Sister Bourgeoys' Institution. Sister Saint Benedict brought the remains of her departed Sister, to Quebec ; they were deposited in the Chapel of Our Lady of Pity, in the Cathedral of this city. She then took up her Cross of deep sorrow, and returned to Ville-Marie, where she long retained the remembrance of this bitter moment. She rejoined her Sisters of Louisbourg, in the realms of bliss, many years after, in 1760, at the age of seventy five.

Bishop de Saint Vallier, was anxious to have the Sisters resume their labors, at Louisbourg. Consequently, His Lordship wrote to the french minister, saying: "The motives which first led to the establishment of the Congregation, at Louisbourg, give me the assurance, that you will do all in your power, to facilitate the return of the zealous Sister missionaries, whom the sad consequences of war, obliged to seek an asylum in France. They are actually at La Rochelle, and as they have been deprived, by these painful circumstances, of every thing belonging to them. I beg that they may be provided, with every essential necessity, before they leave France."

His Lordship's request was granted, and in the month of August, 1749, the Sisters and a certain number of the inhabitants of Louisbourg, embarked in one of the royal vessels and sailed westwards. It was sad for them, to leave the mortal remains of their dear and regretted Sister Saint Placidus, behind them, and no doubt, the remembrance of their last visit to her tomb, cast a shade of sorrow, upon the joyous thought, that they were returning to the scenes of their consoling labors. But they shall kneel there again.

The ocean had been crossed, and the vessels neared the shore; but no pen can depict the uncontrollable emotions of sadness, which took possession of their hearts, as they gazed, upon the site of their once peaceful home, now devastated and shorn of all that had endeared it, to them. Many sad remembrances came too, to add to their poignant anguish; it was wound upon wound to their disconsolate hearts, but they knew for whom they suffered, and worthy daughters of their Sainted Mother, Margaret Bourgeoys, they tried to imitate her; they kissed the chalice and drained it to the dregs. Some time after their return, to Louisbourg, one of the Sisters fell dangerously ill. A paralytic stroke threatened to deprive Sister Saint Gertrude of life, and unable to procure her the treatment and the care, that her state demanded, it was thought advisable for her, to return to Ville-Marie.

We can easily imagine, dear reader, how joyfully the Sisters

of the mother-house, extended their arms to the dear missionaries of Louisbourg, who had come home to them, after enduring so many hardships and trials. But the recital of their troubles and difficulties, was far from discouraging those, who listened to the sad details, connected with the besieged city, and the hour of exile. Two more Sisters consented willingly to replace those, whom infirmity had rendered unfit, for the privations and hardships of the missionary life. Sisters Saint Thecla and Saint Vincent of Paul, said a long good bye, to Ville-Marie, and started with undaunted courage, for the mission of Louisbourg. It was in 1750. They shall never seek its peaceful shades again. The extreme poverty of the mission, and the many trials, supported by those who went there, would have discouraged others, less zealous for God's honor and glory ; others, less desirous to walk in the footsteps of their crucified model. But who loves and suffers not ? Upon the assurances given, that assistance would be sent to them from France, the Sisters wishing to resume their functions at once, procured the necessary materials for rebuilding their convent ; and though they were deprived of every pecuniary resource, trusting in Providence, they set to work dilligently, and in the autumn of 1753, just a century since the arrival of their mother foundress in Canada, the edifice was completed. Hearts were again filled, with the brightest anticipations for the future. Alas ! alas ! poor Louisbourg ! crosses again, how God must have loved the Sisters who labored there ! for, from trial and affliction they had no respite. It was the 7th of October, the day closed serenely ; all had retired to rest, trusting in the watchful guardianship of their kind Heavenly Father. Hardly were their eyes closed in sleep, and the fatigues of the day forgotten, when there arose suddenly, a storm so violent and so disastrous, that it filled all hearts with consternation. It seemed to exercise its wrath in a special manner upon the new convent, for, not only was the house totally destroyed, but even the timber and other building materials were rendered perfectly useless. This sad accident, compelled the Sisters to abandon their project for the moment. In this extremity, they had again recourse to France.

ons were renewed, kind promises were sent in return, but none of them was ever accomplished. A considerable time elapsed ; then, seeing that there was no use in waiting and asking, that their works of zeal suffered, a second attempt was made to build a convent, at their own expense. God blessed their confidence in his Providence, they set to work with renewed ardor, and they succeeded. The scene upon which their eyes rested, some months later, was in itself, a compensation for their past trials. So they thought, when the joyous murmur of a youthful multitude, thronged within their convent courts, to hear again the oft repeated inculcations, whose practice would bring them happiness, here below, eternal happiness above. A holy joy pervaded all around, and the blessings of peace, tarried at their door.

List 'tis music stealing, over the rippling sea,  
List! list! list to the convent bells.

It was a moment of consolation, a moment only. Joy loves not to linger here below, and oftentimes the privations caused by their poverty, would cast an anxious shade over their features, as they saw the restraint imposed upon their works of zeal. Pressing solicitations were again made in their favor, by the government officers, who resided at Louisbourg. They desired most ardently, to enlarge the Sisters' sphere of usefulness. The minister at Court was, indeed, moved at the recital of all they had suffered ; and in awaiting the annuity, which he thought the king would certainly grant, he requested that his Majesty's representatives in Louisbourg, should assist the Sisters, speedily and generously. Such however was not the will of God, and each time, that consolations came from man, or from their own perseverings efforts, He sent a cross, He exacted from them a sacrifice. Time sped on, with its ever varying joys and consolations, strengthening heroic impulses, and multiplying occasions, for gaining merit. Such is life, such, its constant round of griefs and pleasures.

A few years spent thus, and the deplorable events of 1740, were again renewed. France and England again. Ah ! the



inhabitants of Louisbourg, never forget that July morning, of 1758. The scholastic year was drawing to a close, and many a young heart, buoyant with fond hopes and bright anticipations, for the morrow, was doomed now, to the direst of earthly griefs ; faces pale with consternation, eyes bedewed with tears, now gazed upon the beach, for there, before their ill-fated city, were spread in bold array, convincing proofs, of their inevitable ruin. Messengers found their way in all directions, even to the shady path, leading up to the convent. All must go, women and children to a place of safety, shouted the command, and pointed to the formidable armament, ready to lay siege to the city. There, they were, twenty-three men-of-war, vessels, eighteen frigates, sixteen thousand men, with artillery in proportion ; all were there, awaiting the signal for attack. It was given, and from the fort, terrified women and children, beheld the horrors of the siege.

"Bullets and shells, rained upon the city," writes the Governor of Louisbourg, in one of its Court despatches ; "among our wounded, we counted eighteen officers, eighty soldiers, twelve of the citizens, besides a few killed. Last evening, a bomb shell, fell upon our Hospital, wounding two of the Religious, and killing a surgeon."

The siege did not last long, for the Commander of the Louisbourg forces, deeming that a longer resistance would be not only useless, but in reality, prejudicial in every way to the inhabitants, determined to capitulate. It was the 19th of this same month. The Commander's resolution, excited the deepest indignation, among the brave officers and valiant soldiers, who would have sacrificed their lives a thousand times, in defending their homes, rather than surrender them, to the victorious English. Their noble indignation, availed little, or nothing. Their displeasure increased, and the officers of the famous battalion of Cambris, refused to submit ; they tore up their flags, rather than deliver them up, and the soldiers imitating their example, shivered their guns to atoms ; it was all the satisfaction they had. By this surrender, it was stipulated that the garrison should be transported to England, and the

remainder of the inhabitants to France. It is not easy for us who enjoy the sweets of peace, surrounded by the comforts and enjoyments of home, and above all, unacquainted with the horrors of war, to form even a faint idea, of the alarms and torturing fears of each one of the Sisters. In the midst of carnage, desolation and fear, unable to raise their eyes, without encountering some harrowing spectacle ; every faculty of the mind, every sentiment of sensibility, was writhing in expressible tortures. Theirs was, indeed, a martyrdom long and cruel. Dragged anew from their peaceful home, Sisters Saint Arsenius, Saint Thecla and Saint Vincent, their two servants and their pupils, were conducted to the vessels, which were to transport them to the shores of France, and endure there, the pains and solitudes of exile. More than seventeen thousand persons, we are told, shared their sad fate. A few days previous to these events. Sister Saint Thecla, fell ill of a malignant fever. How were they to expose her, to the fatigues of a long sea voyage ? Her companions begged and supplicated, for a little delay, but all to no purpose.

The new masters of Louisbourg, seemed to stifle every sentiment of respect and compassion, nay, humanity : " Go, they must, and at once ; for the vessels, were to raise anchor in a few hours." We will draw a veil, dear reader, over the last harrowing scenes of their departure from the convent.

Words are inadequate to describe their painful position, their deep affliction. They ascended the vessels, with weeping eyes and breaking hearts, where privations and sufferings, of a still sadder hue, awaited them. Ah, no doubt, their keenest anguish at this moment, was the sight of their poor suffering Sister, and their inability, to alleviate her tortures ; the tortures of her agonized heart, as she thought of her dying hour upon the bosom of the deep. Ah ! many a glorified martyr, had suffered less. The horrors of the siege, and the uncertainty of her fate, had no doubt aggravated a disease, for which no sympathy could be obtained. Fatigue, fear and mental anguish, do not lighten bodily pain. Saint Thecla's sad misapprehensions were verified ; she sank neath, the weight of her cross,

and breathed her last, in the arms of her sorrow stricken Sisters, ten days only, after their departure from Louisbourg. This circumstance was more heart-rending, than all their accumulated trials, their grief seemed almost despair, when in that moment of bitter anguish, the body of their martyred Sister, was consigned to its watery grave. No cross, alas ! tells where she rests ; flowers may not bloom upon her tomb ; no sweet breathing incense may waft the *requiem* prayers on high. Alone she sleeps, of the thousands who shared her name, who wore her garb ; the name, the garb of the Congregation of Notre Dame,

"The sea, the blue lone sea hath one,  
She lies, where pearls lie deep,  
She was the loved of all,  
Yet none, o'er her lone bed may weep."

(HEMANS.)

The others Sisters reached France, more dead than alive, and for the second time, sought hospitality in Saint Stephen's Hospital. There, a letter, fit to console and to strengthen them, was waiting to pour its sympathetic balm, upon their bleeding hearts. It was from their Mother Superior of Ville-Marie. Public accounts had apprized the inmates of the Mother-House, of all that had befallen the unfortunate city of Louisbourg, of the Sisters' removal to a stranger land, and they wrote to their exiles, as the heart writes, when its own, its beloved, are suffering in absence. Let us read the answer sent by Sister Saint Arsenius, the well tried Superior of Louisbourg. She says :

"No ; I cannot express my gratitude, dear Reverend Mother, for your extreme kindness in writing to us, at the moment, we least thought of consolation ; nor can I attempt to give you the details of the multiplied crosses and afflictions, which God has been pleased to shower on us, for the last eighteen months. I do not know how it is, that we are still alive, after experiencing the fears and miseries, incident to this cruel and disastrous war. Sorrows, alas ! but how little, how less than nothing, when compared to this intoler-

“able anguish, as we saw our dear Sister Saint Thecla, taken  
“from us, in the midst of circumstances, so truly painful ; and  
“that, only ten days after our departure from Louisbourg ; I  
“watched beside her, I witnessed her agony, and received her  
“last sigh. I stood by, when her lifeless body was thrown  
“into the sea, and I cannot, even were I to try, chase  
“that fearful sight from my mind. That fearful splash ! O my  
“God ! is still ringing in my ears. I hear it still, I shall  
“hear it always. Her death has plunged me into a sea of  
“grief, from which I can never emerge. I need not recom-  
“mend her to your prayers, nor those of our dear Sisters of  
“Ville-Marie. You share our grief and know what should  
“be done.....

“We are again at Saint Stephen’s Hospital, and are treated  
“with every mark of cordiality and sincere charity. But  
“withal, we feel that we are far, far from home, dear Mother,  
“far from our loved Ville-Marie !

“We place our trust in Providence, more firmly than ever ;  
“divine assistance has never failed us, in the midst of our sa-  
“crifices and privations. The English troops, had the good  
“fortune, to find our convent in Louisbourg, well supplied  
“with every thing. We left them all ; it was impossible to do  
“otherwise. May God be praised, for all that has happened  
“to us ; most willingly, I renew the sacrifice for His love.  
“Never, perhaps, did a siege prove more cruel or more disas-  
“trous. When I recall all that has transpired, my very  
“strength fails me, and I tremble, as when sorrow first came  
“upon us. Alas ! I fear that our dear Canada, will soon meet  
“with a similar fate. There are no satisfactory accounts given  
“on this subject. God, I trust, will send help from above.  
“Our holy Mother, will not suffer our enemies to destroy her  
“temples, or abolish her devotion. What would we do,  
“without it ?”

Such, dear reader, was the virtue and the submission of  
Margaret Bourgeoys’ daughters, during their long hours of exile.  
Was it not another of the stupendous miracles, won from  
Heaven, by the venerable foundress. It was a far off mission,

that "LaRochelle," where the Sisters continued to instruct their pupils, confiding young hearts, who shared their sorrows, and no doubt, the lessons taught in such a way, and in such an hour, were duly appreciated, and produced a lasting impression, upon the dear objects of their zeal and devotedness. Through the intercession of friends, the sisters received an annual pension of 250 livres each, from the French court. Other little sums were added to this, and in consequence, they were enabled to defray their daily expenses. But still, they bore the cross. Their worthy superior, Sister Saint Arsenius, whose life had been so conformable to that of the Divine Crucified, was now presented with her last bitter portion. She too was to die in a strange land. Though submissive to the will of God, still she had hoped for the grace, to draw her last sigh, within the hallowed precincts of the mother house, and in the midst of all her afflictions, hope would point out that future day, of her return to Ville-Marie. But such was not the Master's will. She knew it now, renewed her sacrifice, and resigned her soul calmly into the hands of her Creator, the 5th of July, 1764. Six years from the siege of Louisbourg. This worthy sister at the time of her death, was sixty-one years old, and had consecrated forty-nine to the service of Jesus and Mary, in the Congregation of Notre Dame. Her remains were interred the following day, in the parish cemetery of "LaRochelle," just beside those of Sister Saint Placidus, who was the chosen victim of the first siege of Louisbourg. Never perhaps, did more bitter tears, consecrate an exile's grave, than those which fell from the eyes of her surviving companions and pupils.

*Requiescant in Pace !*

Of the little community of Louisbourg, two only remained, Sister Saint Vincent and Sister Genevieve, a faithful domestic, who had shared with them, in all their trials, and to whom they gave this name, in return for her devotedness. When news of this death, reached Ville-Marie, thoughts of the stricken and of their exile, now more lonely, and sadder than ever, brought

with them yearnings for their return. Letters from home, what joy and consolation they bring to the absent, heart sick and weary. "Come home to us," writes the superior of the community of Ville-Marie, "come home, if possible, there is no prospect of ever returning to Louisbourg. Come home." Ah ! how gladly they would have obeyed the summons, and returned to their own.

Oh ! it would have been joy unutterable, to feel once more the cooling zephyrs of their native land, to bend the knee once more, before that antiquated home statue, of their heavenly Mother, and gaze once more upon the sky so blue, of their own Ville-Marie. 'Twere too much for earthly bliss, and God willed it not. They would go home, to their eternal home, but by another route. "We shall all meet in Heaven," was their submissive answer. The Abbé de l'Ile-Dieu, who had ever proved a most constant and devoted friend, Heaven bless his memory ! he, from whom they had received so much sympathy, so much encouragement, he too, wrote to the superior of the mother house :

"You are not the only one, dear Reverend Mother, who desires the Sisters' return. They are more anxious than you can imagine, to rejoin you all. But how can I, at such a time, expose them to the dangers of a long sea voyage ? Sister Saint Vincent is more than disposed to obey you, notwithstanding all, but I do not think, that it is either her interest or yours, to venture now. I beg of you to be firmly persuaded, that I seek her good, and the advantage of your community ; for this act, which is prompted by a deep and sincere interest, I beg a share in your pious prayers, and in those of your sisters, for whom I entertain sentiments of sincere veneration.

"Allow me, Reverend Mother, &c., &c."

How God loves to protect those, who confide in His Love ! Strangers, exiles, still, they meet with kind friends, to whom was given, all that was requisite to lead their hearts, their souls to Heaven.

A few months later, and Sister Saint Vincent too went, to rejoin her companions, in that better land, where tears and sorrows are unknown.

“What ere the inward pang might be,  
She told it not, mute and meekly still,  
She bowed unto her Saviour's will,  
Nor murmured at the stern decree,  
For gently falls the chastening rod,  
On him, whose hope is in his God.”

“I did not think, Reverend Mother,” writes l'Abbé de l'Île-  
“Dieu,” that I should write so soon again, and under circum-  
“stances so painful to us both. It is with sad feelings and an  
“aching heart, that I inform you of our recent affliction. Your  
“little community of Louisbourg, no longer exists. God has  
“been pleased to dispose of its last member, in the person of our  
“lamented Sister Saint Vincent. In a very short time, you have  
“lost two good and excellent sisters. I cannot say how deeply  
“I regret them, both were to me a continual source of edifica-  
“tion. Their lives, their virtues, so heroically practised up to  
“their last moments, were more than enough to incite to vir-  
“tuous resolves, and endeared them to all. They have left in  
“this community, mementoes that call forth our highest admi-  
“ration. Here, they were loved, venerated, and regretted. I  
“cannot refuse them, my deep sentiments of gratitude, for  
“the perfect submission and confidence, with which they  
“honored me. They looked upon me at all times, as their  
“father, their guide, and their superior, and sought my counsel  
“and advice in all things. The dear and respected commu-  
“nity of Louisbourg, no longer exists; but there remains a  
“good virtuous girl, whom we call Sister Genevieve, she accom-  
“panied your sisters from Louisbourg, and would never con-  
“sent to leave them. Should she desire to join a religious  
“community, I will do all in my power to assist her, and in  
“truth, I see no means of returning to Canada for a long time.  
“Sister Genevieve is a person of sound judgment, and solid  
“piety. She reads and writes remarkably well, and can be  
“received, either as a choir or as a lay sister. A little expense



"will be necessary for that, but I shall see to it myself. Rely upon the sincerity of my desire, to serve you on this occasion, and at all times, I shall ever entertain sentiments of esteem and veneration, for you, Reverend Mother, as well as for your community, in union with our Lord, and in His divine charity."

No subsequent attempts were made, to restore the mission of Louisbourg, mission that had produced so glorious a harvest for eternity. It was not, that there was a lack of courage and generosity; not that Margaret Bourgeoys' daughters, feared to tread the path so nobly traced, by their heroic sisters; they knew that life must have its object, that it was not given us to be thrown away; for this reason, their hearts were filled with generous sentiments, they were elated with heroic impulses, to do something for His love; they were ready to return, but alas! there was no demand for their zeal and charity. Louisbourg was completely ruined, it never recovered its primitive splendor. Hushed forever, are its joyous festivities; the gay throngs who left its regal mansions, in mirth and pleasure, have disappeared with the last echoes of their joyous revelry. Of the five light-hearted sisters, who sacrificed so willingly their happy homes at Ville-Marie, but one came back to the mother house. God had accepted her efforts, and she came home, richly laden with infirmities, which in their own due time, were to win for her, an eternal crown. The others dropt off, one by one, each had her chalice, each had her thorn. Chosen souls, destined to live and die, in the path of Calvary. God is everywhere, Margaret Bourgeoys loved to say, remembering these oft-repeated words of their pious founder, they blessed the Divine Will that rules over our destinies, and kissed the Omnipotent hand, which directs the circumstances of our lives, according to His own merciful designs upon our souls. Sufferings submissively borne, never fail to bring forth virtues, and when our charity is thus developed, in the midst of thorns, it spiritualizes every act of our lives, and thereby, renders us fitting instruments to accomplish the divine pleasure. It was thus, with the fervent missionaries of Louis-

bourg ; they yielded to His divine influence, and attracted by the force of this celestial magnet, they followed in His favorite path, the last wherein He walked, when He sacrificed His life to redeem fallen man ; the way of the cross. " Be ye followers of me." Jesus left Heaven to take up the cross ; we, poor mortals, leave the cross at the gate of Heaven. Louisbourg has shared the fate of many other cities, who flitted their brief time, then all was over. Once only, since the martyr sisters left their mission, have the daughters of Margaret Bourgeoys, returned to that spot, so fertile in blest remembrances. It was during the summer of 1866. The closing scenes of the scholastic year were over, and a little relaxation deemed necessary, for the sisters in their far-off mission of Arichat. Vacation time has its legitimate joys, it must be so to compensate for the sacrifices, which make up the life of a missionary. A trip to the place once called Louisbourg, was proposed, a joyous acceptance followed. It may prove interesting to you, dear reader, to visit these scenes, twice desecrated by war and bloodshed, so often the theatre of noble sacrifices and generous devotion. We extract the following, from a letter written soon after the event.

" It would be impossible to describe our feelings, as we  
" drew near Louisbourg, once, so beautiful and flourishing,  
" now a field of ruins. The silence and utter desolation of the  
" place, strike you forcibly, while a host of historical facts, of  
" family remembrances, crowd in, upon your memory. Your  
" heart is touched, and your eyes are moistened, as they rest  
" upon the sod, bearing every where, marks of past greatness,  
" and leading you to muse on the instability of all things  
" human. The noble ramparts, now in part destroyed, where  
" so many brave died, in defending their country, their honor  
" and their rights ; a few poor dwellings, beside which lies a  
" fishing boat and other implements of a seafaring life, tell at  
" once who reside there. We first visited a little church, poor  
" and lonely it was, a perfect type, it would seem, of that first  
" humble dwelling, wherein He lived. We entered and sang  
" the "*Ave Maris stella*," and as the sweet notes of our hymn

“folled out upon the balmy air, they seemed to say : “All ye who pass, stop for an instant, and move your lips in prayer. The harmonious tones were heeded, for they came all. All, but “still a few : weather beaten fishermen, women holding their “little ones in their arms, they joined us, and no doubt mingled “their prayers with ours. We were evidently objects of curiosity.

“Our footsteps lingered as we left the chapel, and these “poor people, scrutinized us to their hearts content. Here and “there, we saw the remains of fine mansions and magnificent “gardens ; then we understood that we were standing upon “the still picturesque site of Plaisance.

“After walking a considerable distance, we entered the city “of Louisbourg. We were accompanied by an old man, who “had kindly consented to act, as our Cicerone ; from him we “learned, that the people around the place, now called this “spot, ‘Holy Ground,’ and to impress his words still more “forcibly upon us, he added : that no man, as far back as he “could remember, had ever seen a snake, a frog, or worm of “any kind, in the place. The old man’s description increased “our interest, as we gazed upon the remarkable places he “pointed out to us.

“There was the eastern gate, place of arms, the governor’s “palace, and the famous bulwarks, which we easily recognized “by their ruins, and the site they occupied. In one place, the “barracks were still standing, also two or three bastions, in “a state of complete preservation. Upon entering there, a “strange sensation crept over our whole frame, for within these “subterranean passages, all the women and children of Louis- “bourg had taken refuge, in their hour of doom. Here they “gave vent to their poignant anguish, and upon this cold “clammy earth, fell their bitter tears, their tears of uncontrollable sorrow. It remains as they left it. One more spot “attracted our attention, it was the moment to enjoy the long “coveted pleasure, of gazing upon the site, where stood the “convent of the Congregation, in days of yore. The foundations of this antiquated dwelling, are of stone and in a good

“ state of preservation, as also the entire walls of the house,  
“ which are built of brick. Our first thought and our first act  
“ was to kneel, and say with all our hearts, a ‘*De Profundis*,’  
“ for those who had labored there, for those who had so nobly  
“ sacrificed their lives, for the honor and glory of God, We  
“ then descended to the basement, but what was our surprise  
“ and emotion, upon beholding there, a perfect carpet of wild  
“ daisies, better known in Canada as the *marguerite*. How  
“ many recollections, a simple flower, will often bring. Mar-  
“ garita of Canada, and those who dwelt there, were Margaritas  
“ too, her self-sacrificing generous daughters. We stooped and  
“ gathered some, and these pretty wild flowers, blooming so  
“ sweetly there, in this uncultivated spot, had their own sig-  
“ nificance ; they spoke to our hearts, far more eloquently than  
“ words, and told us how our Sister missionaries had toiled there,  
“ 118 years before, winning hearts by word and example ; to  
“ each of us they said : “ Go thou, and do likewise.” Flowers,  
“ like all things coming from the Creator’s hands, have their  
“ mission to fulfil, and perchance kind Heaven had placed  
“ them there, at such a time, that their beauty and their fragrance  
“ might incite us to the practice of those virtues, of which the  
“ Margarita is so sweet an emblem. The lesson was given and  
“ understood. Then before withdrawing from a spot, so  
“ hallowed with its sacred memories, we knelt again upon  
“ the soft carpet, Heaven gave, and prayed with renewed  
“ fervor, for the heroic five, who had embalmed this shrine,  
“ with the perfume of their virtues, who had watered it with  
“ their tears, ere they left forever, a spot, to which their hopes  
“ and their sorrows had bound them.

“ Poor Louisbourg ! a last look at the site of the once beau-  
“ tiful city, and we turned away, leaving the place to its native  
“ loneliness and desolation.”

But withal, kind Heaven may at some future day add a  
brighter page to its history. The shades of those who loved,  
toiled and prayed there, may perhaps bring back to these silent  
wastes, souls to save, and hearts to win them.

"Holy to human nature seems,  
The long forsaken spot!  
To deep affections, tender dreams,  
Hopes of a brighter lot.  
Therefore in silent reverence here,  
Hearth of the dead, I stand,  
Where joy and sorrow, smile and tear,  
Have linked one kindred band."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVENTH.

The English conquest, or Canada in 1759. — The city of Quebec is taken by the English. — State of the missions in this locality during the siege. — Convent of the Pointe aux Trembles. — Incident during the attack upon l'Ile d'Orleans. — One of the Sisters is compelled to seek shelter in the woods. — An unknown protector in the hour of danger. — Other details concerning the conquest. — An English regiment at Point Saint Charles. — The Sisters of Ville-Marie.

After recalling and dwelling upon the misfortunes of Louisbourg, let us return, dear reader, to Canada, and see in what manner, political events transpired there, during the year 1759. So far as they regard the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, we shall find there now, as we have already found before, much to admire, much to console.

We shall witness once more, many evident proofs of divine protection, upon Margaret Bourgeoys' institution ; many thrilling scenes, will again appear before our eyes, and lead us more than ever, to the conviction real and strong, that the work of the venerable foundress, is indeed dear and near to the Saviour's loving heart. In the moment of danger and fear, so many special blessings, so many special marks of heavenly favor have been granted, that we cannot refrain from exclaiming. " Her work will live forever, because God has blessed it, and immortality is promised to His benediction." As we advance in life, and view the never ending drama of each individual existence, as we note the lights and shades, which darken or rejoice our daily paths, we are apt to draw conclusions at first sight, and stigmatize, as misfortunes, events, which are in reality, graces and blessings ; still more, clear manifestations of a special protection, of special love. " Every cloud, has a silver lining," and how many times, to our own personal knowledge, have we found flowers beautiful and fragrant, beneath the snows we feared so much to encounter, around the cross we feared so much to accept.

We forget, too often alas ! that an all powerful and loving Father, holds our destiny within his hands. Ah ! had we but a little faith, how differently we would look upon our daily crosses and afflictions ; how differently we would submit to His adorable will. It is this want of faith, this want of trust in God, that marks the line of separation, between us and those, whose virtuous lives, we so much admire ; those who have preceeded us in the paths of generous submission, and whose loving trust in His guidance gave a tinge of heroism, to their hope, their love, their confidence. Let us illustrate our meaning.

In the course of this same year 1759, the English troops laid siege to the city of Quebec and ruined the place, almost entirely, by fire from the most formidable artillery ever seen in Canada. It was a supreme crisis, 80,000 English soldiers, stood there, before the walls of the city, and for sixty days, bullets and bomb shells, rained upon the ramparts.

At this time, there were four different establishments of the Congregation, in the district of Quebec. One, in the Lower Town, a second in the island of Orleans, a third at Chateau Richer, and a fourth, at Point aux Trembles. The Sister Missionaries of the three first mentioned places, being greatly exposed to the dangers of war, on account of their respective positions, were advised by His Lordship, the Bishop of Quebec, to close the missions, and return to their community, at Ville-Marie. The counsel was wisely given, for the enemy took possession of the convent in Quebec, and when leaving for another locality, reduced it to ashes. A similar fate, awaited their convent at Chateau Richer. The Sisters, who had listened to the recital of the Louisbourg disasters, feared a like destiny and hastened to abandon their mission. One of the Sisters in advance of the others, took the direction of Pointe-aux-Trembles, where a certain number of women and children, had already taken refuge.

The English troops had captured Quebec, in consequence, the French with their allies, fell back, upon Pointe-aux-Trembles. There was no more security for the Sisters there, on account



of the continued efforts of the enemy, to take possession of the place. The English soon accomplished their design, and the entire village was given up, to the soldiers and to plunder; the convent of the Congregation was invested by the enemy and pillaged. Almost dead from fear, the Sisters raised their hearts to God in prayer, and fled in the direction of the woods, heedless of the danger, to which they exposed themselves. One Sister alone, remained at the mission. She knew not what to do, and could not think of abandoning the children, confided to her care. Her devotedness, placed her in a most alarming position. The convent rendered conspicuous, by its size and peculiar appearance, soon attracted the strangers' curiosity; the English officers came to the house, and finding a certain number of young persons, with the women of the village, commanded that all should be taken prisoners. Consequently, Sister Saint Agnes, her pupils, and the other persons, who had taken refuge in the convent, were led in triumph, to the admiral's vessel. The children, gave away to such passionate bursts of grief, and clung so confidently to the devoted Sister, that these officers took her, to be their mother. They had no real idea of her position, towards them; deprived of faith, they could admire a philanthropic act, but might not understand, nor even discern the beauty and the heroism of religious devotedness. Her dignified air, and the calm resolution she evinced, at this moment, struck them however with admiration, and learning soon after, that the heroic woman, was simply a Sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame, and that these young persons, who pressed so lovingly around her, had been confided to her care, by their parents, for the period of their education, they began to view her, in quite another light, and paid her every mark of respect and attention. A soldier however, had perceived the silver cross, which it is customary for the Sisters of the Congregation to wear, and approaching cautiously, he cut the cord, from which it hung. The act was indelicate, but after all, who knows, the precious emblem may have been to him, a source of manifold consolations, at a later period. The following day, the English General, to whom there

incidents had been related, gave orders that they should return to their homes, and remain there, unmolested.

The other poor Sister, from the island of Orleans, who had fled so precipitately to the woods, without knowing where she was going, or what would become of her, wandered all day long, trusting in the watchful care of Providence. Evening drew near, and with it, came many fearful apprehensions. She was alone, and might fall at any moment, into the hands of soldiers, constantly on the alert. On, she went through many a tangled path, her feet blistered,—her strength exhausted,—her heart sick and desponding, but praying, as we pray in the hour of danger, with all the fervor of her soul. The poor Sister walked on, starting every now and then, as the rustling of the forest leaves, stirred by the evening breeze, fell upon her ear. The shades grew deeper, and the twinkling stars peeped out, from among the dark green leaves, while the bright moon, sent anon her silvery rays, as if to guide the fugitive, on her lonely dangerous route,

“Oh! the forest paths  
Are dim and wild, e'en when the sunshine streams,  
Through their high arches, but when powerful night  
Comes, with her cloudy phantoms, and her pale  
Uncertain moonbeams, and the hollow sounds  
Of her mysterious winds, their aspect then,  
Is of another, and a more fearful world.

A realm of indistinct and shadowy forms,  
Waking strange thoughts, almost too much for this,  
Our frail terrestrial nature.”

(HEMANS.)

Hastening on, the poor Sister soon reached the edge of the wood ; there, at a short distance down by the river side, she, espied a small cabin, to which she now directed her steps, trembling and faint from fatigue and terror. At this moment, footsteps were heard approaching ; she turned, and a soldier whom she had not observed, drew near, saying with the greatest respect and courtesy : “Sister, you are greatly exposed in this by-path. at such an hour, and the enemy so near. Take shelter and a little rest, in this sentry box, until morning ! Do not fear, I will keep watch outside and

"protect you." She accepted gratefully, and without a moment's hesitation, entered this cabin ; but we can easily imagine, that it was not to sleep. The entire night, was spent in prayer, and when the first glimpses of the morning broke, her unknown benefactor came forward, and saluting her respectfully, said : " Sister, you may now return to your convent, follow this path, " it is free from danger, and will lead you directly home." The Sister obeyed, thanking God from her inmost soul, for this special mark of divine protection ; her gratitude was more sincere and heartfelt, because of the strong conviction, that her guide was no other, than her Angel Guardian, whose protection she had constantly implored, during the long eventful day. She reached the convent in safety ; her companions soon returned by another route, and to them she related her adventures. Their consolation and gratitude increased, when they recalled the dangers, from which all had been preserved.

General Murray, remained in command of a garrison composed of the regiments, who had served during the late campaign. A few weeks after the capitulation, some six hundred officers and soldiers, were sent to France, according to the agreement of September 18th, this same year, 1759. Ville-Marie, then became the *rendes-vous*, of the french forces, from all parts of the colony ; their sojourn was however short, for the 8th of September following, they were compelled to lay down their arms, before some twenty thousand men of the English army. The terms of capitulation were signed the 9th of September, 1760, and protection promised, by the English Commander.

According to the records of the times, upwards of one thousand and one hundred persons left Canada forever, these included the best families of the country.

Canada, had now passed into other hands, though the hearts of those that remained, were still attached to France. the home of their ancestors. Had she not been to them too, a benefactress and a mother? Ah ! hard it was, to crush the tender associations, to break the links that bound them to that dear old land, but such was, alas ! their destiny, and experience

has proved, that it was not an unhappy one. The conquest did not bring to Canada the many disadvantages, which had been apprehended; the free exercise of her religion remained, and Ville-Marie still retains her grand old name of Catholic Montreal. How can it be otherwise! It is the Queen of Heaven's domain, celestial guards protect it. This change in the political features of the country cast no unpleasant influence, upon Margaret Bourgeoys' institution. In the city, as well as in the different missions of Ville-Marie, the Sisters of the Congregation, remained undisturbed, and continued to exercise the functions of their vocation, as before. In the district of Quebec, the Convent of the Pointe-aux-Trembles was the only one molested; it remained in the possession of the English troops, for the space of two years. In 1761, General Murray, gave orders for its restoration, so, that the Sisters might resume their former occupations, of instructing and forming young girls, to the virtues and practice of a Christian life. The same injunctions were given, for the other missions, interrupted or injured during the late war.

Tradition, has handed down to us, the following incident, relative to the arrival of the victorious English troops, in the city of Ville-Marie :

A certain number of officers and soldiers, promenading one day, at a considerable distance from the city, descried near the river side, something that seemed to them, a large stone fortress. A better place they thought, could not be chosen for camp-ground. In consequence, a certain quantity of field ammunition, cannon, &c., was brought in the evening, and placed against the huge stone wall, without further investigation; tents were raised, and all retired, satisfied with the day's work. Or, the officers had taken their station at Point St. Charles, and the pretended fortress, was nothing more, than a farm house and its requisites, all the property of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. Two of the Sisters always resided there. The following morning about daybreak, one of the Sisters, while dressing perceived the military movements of the preceeding night. Calling her companion, she pointed to

the English colors, playing there in the morning breeze. Alarmed at first, they could not understand what it meant, and knew not what to do; finally, it was decided that, their morning meditation over, they would go and ascertain, why the English troops, were placed so near. "I am one of their country women," remarked Sister Saint Scholastica, "I will ask them to take us under their protection." No sooner said than done.

The two Sisters, directed their steps towards the open field, where the operations of the preceeding night were in full display. Addressing one of the astonished guards, they requested to say a few words to the chief officer. No doubt the sentinel was surprised, to hear the Sister address him in English, and calling one of his comrades, desired him to deliver the message. After a little delay and as much ceremony, the Sisters found themselves in the presence of the officer in command.

Sister Saint Scholastica, had forsaken her home in merry England, some years previous to these events. Led onward by Him, who rules the destinies of men, she came through many a mysterious path, even to Margaret Bourgeoys' Congregation, which His will pointed out, as her future home.

For His love, she sacrificed the legitimate joys of the happy fire-side in York, and in the midst of adopted friends, found the promised hundred fold. She was too happy on this occasion, to seek favor and protection, for the home she now called her own, and God's Providence had placed her there, at just such a time. The officers had not yet discovered their mistake, and willingly assented, when the sisters after all necessary explanation, requested them to visit the premises; then, as a last act of courtesy, suggested that all should be provided with refreshments, from their well-stocked larder, and poultry yard. No refusal was given, and the sisters spent the greater part of the morning, in preparing omelets, &c., which were as speedily devoured by the hungry men, who had indeed profited of the kind invitation, for not an egg, nor a piece of bread or meat, was left in the sisters' possession. All were profuse in giving thanks, for the unexpected hospitality, and when upon retiring, the officer in command, requested to know, in what manner he

could repay so much kindness, the sisters simply demanded, that the country residence and the mother house, should remain unmolested by the troops, in case of danger. He answered at once, that he would be too happy, to repay their hospitality in this manner. Accordingly, the white flag, sign of protection, was unfurled at Point Saint Charles, and another, upon the cupola of the mother house at Ville-Marie. Orders were given to leave the sisters' grounds at once, in consequence, the English camp was removed to another locality ; but, no doubt, the poor soldiers remembered the spot, with grateful feelings.

This is one of many incidents, connected with the events of 1759-1760, but all serve to show, that amid these desolating scenes of war and bloodshed, Margaret Bourgeoys' Congregation of Notre Dame, was at all times, protected and screened from danger, and her children, though surrounded by carnage and perils, were at all times respected.

Once again, it is proved that, "If God watches not over the city, he watches in vain, that keeps it."

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHTH.

The hands that always remained pure.—Spirit of piety and faith at Ville-Marie, up to the time of the English conquest.—A reminiscence of this period, or the youthful guardian of Jeans in the Sacred Host.—The prophecy.—Point Saint Charles.—Sister Saint Agatha's misgivings.—The Congregation of Notre Dame destroyed by fire.—Sister Bourgeoys' heart bleeds anew, at the expiration of sixty-eight years.—Anniversary of the death of the venerable foundress, or the 12th of January at the Congregation.—Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.—Margaret Bourgeoys' memory.

"There is in every heart, a well of feeling,  
Whose depths are moved, at an appointed time,  
Disclosing precious jewels, and revealing  
Love, faith and hope, and energy sublime."

(BRYANT.)

She was but a child, a little child; five summers only, had cast their soft shadows upon her brow, a little child, and there she knelt, in the midst of a crowded thoroughfare, her tiny hands clasping some sacred object, with love and reverence. The light of Heaven rested upon her fair young face, and as the passers-by marked her rapt devotion, they drew near and knelt there too, before Jesus in the Sacred Host.

It was some years previous to the English conquest, the early settlers' characteristic faith and piety, had been faithfully transmitted to their descendants, while sentiments of heroism and honor, still lingered around the family hearths of Ville-Marie. Growing youth caught the flame of heavenly charity, and the features of artless children, expanded beneath the sweet vivifying influence of domestic virtue. In those grand old Catholic times, ere the spirit of christianity was crushed by cold indifference, ere the soul-stirring practices of religion were held up to scorn, by impiety and pride, it was customary, nay an imperious duty, for the faithful to assist their neighbor in every necessity. Neighbor, at that time, was a term vastly significant; the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, were not then confined to a certain number of devoted souls, who bound



themselves by vow, to assist the living and the dying. Not so. It was only when fervor had waxed cold in the hearts of Christians ; when early devotion had lost its ardor and its warmth, that God inspired men to found a special order, wherein deeds of mercy, remnants of primitive catholicity might be preserved, as home treasures. They were relics of that primeval fraternity, which owed its beauty, its worth and its happiness, to the faith from which it sprung. In truth, there is something peculiarly beautiful, in this "unselfish passing out of self," which distinguishes the children of Catholic ages from all others. "Is any one sick among you," says the Apostle, "among you," that is of the great human family, "bring ye in the priests of the Church." It was a divine inspiration given by divine charity itself. "Is any one sick among you." Any one, no matter who, if he is sick, if he is in want, his necessities have unbounded claims, upon your compassion, upon your charity. How faithfully the early Christians, heeded each word of these holy teachings ; and when disease had done its utmost, and placed its victim, beyond the reach of human art and skill, with what loving trust and confidence, the poor sufferer turned to his holy mother the Church, and implored her *Viaticum*, for his journey, through the darksome vale of tears and death ; how sweetly then came flowing from Christian hearts, sentiments of delicate commiseration, of brotherly love and maternal solicitude.

"It was an exuberance,  
Like the perfume of summer flowers,  
Wafted on the evening breeze."

Then, when the Divine Master, left his earthly dwelling to console and strengthen the dying Christian, all accompanied him. Jesus had ever His escort, among His creatures ; all went, animated by a sentiment of honor, of reverence and love, and when the tinkling of the sanctuary bell, announced Him near, all knelt there, where the sound arrested them, and bending their bareheads to the ground, they adored their God, as He passed by ; then rising, they joined in with the pious throng, and followed Him to that last altar, whereon He so loves to

sacrifice Himself—the altar of a human heart. Grand old days of faith ! why are ye not with us still ? Ah, why ? Alas ! Look around and muse, or rather, let us assist at one of those impressive scenes, of characteristic faith and piety. She was but a child, a little child, her name, Elizabeth Prudhomme, her home in an honorable family, conspicuous for the courage, devotedness and zealous piety, which it had ever evinced in the welfare of Ville-Marie. It was evening, the air balmy and cheering, as the consolations which a poor sufferer awaited, on his bed of sickness. The silver chimes of the sanctuary bell, bid him renew his preparations, for He was coming. A multitude of men, women and children, profoundly recollected, came to assist and answer the prayers for the dying.

*Pax Vobis*, said the minister of God, upon entering the apartment ; approaching a neat little repository, he placed the Blessed Sacrament there, amid draperies, flowers, and a glare of light ; then, seated beside the dying penitent, he prepared him for his last communion. The priest absorbed in the solemn duty of the moment, turned not, nor moved. Just then a passing breeze stirred the light drapery, and in an instant, all was in flames. The greatest agitation prevailed, but none dared to speak or approach the little altar.

The youthful Elizabeth was kneeling in the crowd, moved by some religious instinct, she rose quickly from her place, and making her way through the respectful ranks, she stepped softly towards the altar, threw the ribbands attached to the pyx, around her neck, as she observed the priest had done ; then with a wonderful calm and joy, she passed out into the street, and knelt there with the " Holy of Holies," reposing upon her pure young breast ; her attitude, the most touching and reverential, that her angelic piety could suggest. Struck with surprise and admiration, the assistants followed her in silent wonder, and guided by their deep loving faith, they knelt and formed a guard of honor, to Jesus and the pious child. The man of God, unconscious of all that had transpired, arose from the sick man's bedside ; turning, he soon perceived, that he was alone ; his eyes fell upon the little altar, and noticing its con-

fixed appearance, the truth flashed at once upon his mind; he looked around, and perceived the kneeling crowd, with the child in the midst, her face so radiant with happiness, that she seemed like an angel, who had strayed away from the realms of bliss. At the sound of his footsteps, she raised her eyes, and in transports of almost extatic joy, presented the treasure, she had so carefully guarded. "My child," the priest said solemnly, as he took her hands within his own, ere he withdrew the Sacred Host, "my child! the hands that have had the privilege of touching these sacred objects, will ever remain virginal and pure."

We know not what she answered, nor what her thoughts were at this moment, but the solemnity and the impressiveness of his words and of his act, must have been deeply graven upon her heart, and no doubt, the magic tones haunted her memory, until the hour came, when they were ratified in Heaven.

Years rolled by, and sweet remembrances of the blissful day, when she held within her hands the sacred pyx, came on, rejoicing her inmost soul, and casting golden shadows upon her future. "Those hands will ever remain virginal and pure." It was a prophecy from the man of God, and the young girl, felt all its power within her. Ardent longings, to approach the Tabernacle came too; longings to rest forever in its shade. Her pious wishes were realized, and the youthful Elizabeth, consecrated her pure young life to God, in Margaret Bourgeoys' Congregation, at the age of fifteen, and received the name of Saint Agatha. Her long religious career of seventy-five years, gave many special evidences, that she was a child of predilection, singularly favored by Heaven. The purity and the innocence of her life, won for her many privileges, and we cannot but regret the loss of the precious documents, which perished in the conflagration of 1768. Still, tradition has brought down to us a few details, which give us an insight into her life.

She rendered numberless services to her community, and was a constant model of religious perfection; her early virtues, never lost their sweet perfume, their freshness was never

blighted, their fragrance lasted through life, a life of ninety years.

Time passed on in its rapid flight. The joyous *Aïdnias* of Easter, had floated by. "The beautiful spring season," says a record of the time, "invited the Sisters to a promenade, which is no other, than the yearly holiday, spent by them, in their old country house, at Point Saint Charles." These days of recreation are no unwelcome visitors, for they bring relief to the fatigue and restraint of every day life. The body needs relaxation, from time to time, and though none of the religious observances are dispensed with, still, all are allowed to play truant from labor and silence. No restraint is laid upon time, except, at the allotted hours of reunion; each one is at liberty, to amuse herself as she pleases, provided there is nothing contrary to the spirit of the rule, nor to that decorum exacted from all persons consecrated to God.

You are at liberty, once the convent vehicles, have set you safely down, at old Point Saint Charles, unless it has been decided to spend the day, at Saint Paul's island; if the excursion extends to the latter, you have only to cross the broad green lawn, that slopes gently down to the river side; there, an immense boat, whose antiquated form and color, tell you at once that it belongs to the convent, is waiting to bear you, across the blue crested waters of the Saint Lawrence, to the opposite side.

There, is the old farm house, (have you not some remembrance, dear reader, of its old stone walls?) the wooden belfry with its little bell? Since you left these scenes of a happy past, has not your imagination sometimes loved to roam through the wide pleasant fields, and the dark green wood, bathed on either side, by the crystal dashings of the river? Do you not remember the little canoes, the slight paddle boat, the fishing lines, in a word, every thing that could amuse? There too, when the round of merriment had been exhausted, the heart could turn again to the old stone house, and find that something, which never fails to please, which never tires, because it always satisfies. You understand me, dear reader, when I refer

to that little chapel, beautiful in its solitude, beautiful in its simplicity, cherished, because of the consolation it ever gives. There, Jesus is ever present in the Sacred Host. What more can one desire? If you do not go there in the morning, why, you must do so in the afternoon, when the old bell calls you, with its own peculiar ding, ding, to assist at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Closing scene of a well spent day. And when the echoes of *Tantum Ergo* and *Laudate* have died away, preparations are made for the return home.

The antiquated red boat is waiting down below, and when all are ready, it moves off, while soft strains of *Ave Maris Stella* or *Ora pro nobis* are wafted back on the evening breeze. The convent vehicles are in readiness, and back you go, refreshed by the days pleasure, and ready to commence again the following morning, the arduous duties of every day life. We have made a long digression; but if you, dear reader, are among the many, who spent their youthful days within the "old gray walls," you will easily pardon us, for dwelling so long upon scenes, which gladdened so often your youthful days. However, you will now understand, why all was joy and merriment, when there was question of the promenade to Point Saint Charles.

Be that as it may, Sister Saint Agatha, of whom we have already spoken, had always up to this period, been one of the first in readiness, for there was nothing austere or unamiable about her piety; it was as joyous as it was angelic; but to day, she seemed unusually quiet and pensive. Strange misgivings disturbed her wonted calm. Seeking the Mother Superior, she made known the sad presentiment, that filled her mind, requesting at the same time, that the promenade might be put off to another day, "for I have a strange conviction," she added, "that the convent will be destroyed by fire, this very night." The superior endeavored to calm her apprehensions, and notwithstanding the singular esteem and veneration, she entertained for Sister Saint Agatha's eminent virtue, she thought best to pay no attention to the matter. Unable to prevent the excursion, she obtained permission to remain at home; the good Sister lost no time, but spent the entire day in going up and

down stairs, storing away, in a fire proof vault, all the linen and valuable articles, she could lay her hands upon. The community returned in the evening, elated with the day's amusement, and spent the "Petit quart" (1) right merrily, after which they retired.

"Joy hath on earth, no shrine, where sorrow may not dwell,"

Between ten and eleven o'clock, cries of fire ! fire ! aroused the Sisters from their slumbers. They arose hastily, a glaring red light, illumined their apartments, while dense clouds of fire, from a street near by, warned them of their danger. The flames advanced furiously towards the convent buildings, and the Sisters had barely time to escape with their lives. Mr. Favard of Saint Sulpice, their father confessor ran quickly to the scene of desolation, and withdrawing the Blessed Sacrament from their church, transported it to that of the Hôtel-Dieu. It was a sad, sad night.

Morning broke, and brought to the Sisters more vividly than ever, assurances of their dire misfortune. There they were, without an asylum, without means to procure one, solely dependant on God's infinite Providence. They resolved to abandon themselves to His protection, and each one taking up her little parcel, the procession moved on towards the Seminary of Saint Sulpice. Upon reaching the spot, they cast themselves all in tears, at the feet of the worthy Superior, Mr. de Montgolfier. The kind and devoted pastor, whose generous and unflinching charity to all, had won for him the surname of "Father of the orphan and the needy," was deeply moved at the sight of such a spectacle. He endeavored to console his sorrowing children, and the words he addressed to them at this moment, were no doubt prompted by the Holy Spirit. He promised to attend to their most urgent necessities, and led them at once to the Hôtel-Dieu; he placed them in possession of an immense room, called the royal apartment, and by means of curtains and hangings, the Sisters fixed up

(1) The extraordinary recreation, that generally closes these "Congés" or holidays.

a class-room, dormitory, infirmary and community room; and here they dwelt, with their sick, their boarders and day scholars, for the space of five months; long and wearisome, they must have been, notwithstanding the heroic fortitude of the self-sacrificing Sisters. Other and heavier crosses came successively after the conflagration. The different missions connected with the Congregation, dispersed here and there in the country places, felt deeply the loss of their mother-house, and the Sister Missionaries offered their sympathy in every possible way, the doors of their respective houses were thrown open, and hospitality proffered to those of the Sisters, whose services could be dispensed with for the moment. The kind offer was gratefully accepted, but alas! to some with a home, came a grave.

Among those, for whom this trial was reserved, a sad tribute is paid in passing, to the memory of a young Sister, who died in this moment of affliction: Sister Catherine des Musseaux, of the Seraphins, who died suddenly upon reaching her destination. Another, Sister Marie de L'Estage de Saint-Luc, died at the same time at the Hôtel-Dieu. Those of the Sisters, who were not employed in teaching, after hearing mass, and renewing their submission to the will of God, went each day to the ruins of their convent, and endeavored to extract, from the still smoking embers, all that the flames had spared; they worked there all day, then returned to the Hôtel-Dieu, sick and tired, their clothes damp and soiled, their shoes and stockings so wet, that they required assistance to get them off. Their exercises of piety, were then performed, their garments put to dry, for they had no others, to change; the following morning they put on their clothing, not dry and comfortable, but simply stiffened by the cold, and thus they returned to their day's labor. In consequence, a number of the Sisters, contracted serious infirmities, which soon terminated their days. Sister Maugue of the Assumption, at this time Superior of the community, reflecting upon the situation to which the Sisters were reduced, and certain that the Congregation could only be rebuilt, at the cost of privations and sacrifices, proposed that the novices,



whom she could not condemn to so many hardships, and to so much painful toil, should return to their homes, or else enter some other religious house. These young persons, worthy to be ranked among Sister Bourgeoys' children, answered simultaneously that their most ardent desire, was to persevere until death, in the vocation they had chosen; that they esteemed themselves too happy, to share the privations and sacrifices of their dear community, and they begged to contribute by their feeble efforts, to the restoration of the Congregation. As soon as the weather permitted, Mr. de Montgolfier, of Saint Sulpice, gave orders for the convent to be reconstructed. The annals of the community tell us, "that the kind and devoted pastor gave the funds necessary to commence the enterprise, and according as the work advanced, he furnished all things requisite, his generosity knew no bounds and he gave in repeated sums, to the amount of five thousand and nine hundred livres." During this interval, Bishop Briand, of Quebec, visited Ville-Marie; it was in the month of July, this same year, 1768. His Lordship spoke words of consolation to the Sisters, and contributed a certain sum of money, to assist them at the moment. The most essential parts of the building were first erected; the restoration of the church was delayed for some time, and instead, a little chapel was constructed in honor of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and on the 8th of December, festival of the Immaculate Conception, the august sacrifice was offered up for the first time. Past distress, sacrifices and toils, were forgotten in His presence; the Sisters desirous of testifying their deep and sincere gratitude, to their Divine Benefactor, gathered around the Altar, and recited aloud, the prayer, composed by their Venerable Mother, Margaret Bourgeoys, on a similar occasion. Mr. de Montgolfier, was not the only one, who contributed towards the erection of the convent; Mr. de Terlay, of Saint Sulpice, gave also signal proofs of his generosity and devotedness on this occasion; his purse was ever open, when there was question of doing good to the Congregation. Many other devoted friends, came in their turn to comfort and to relieve.

The different missions sent provisions of all kinds, linen, money, kitchen utensils, in a word, every thing that their filial sympathy could suggest. To return to Mr. de Montgolfier, not only did he restore the ancient buildings, but at the same time, he rendered them more spacious and comfortable; he added another story to the house, gave more space for the church, and then provided every necessary decoration for the "House of God." Because of his zeal and charity, he merited the title of Saviour and Benefactor of the Congregation. It is said that about fifty thousand livres were expended on the new convent, the entire sum furnished by Divine Providence. The following year, 1769, the Sisters of the Congregation, thanks to the wise and prudent measures, taken by their Superior, Sister of the Assumption, made the acquisition of the entire piece of land, known as Saint Paul's island; a part, only up to this time, having been the property of the Sisters. Since then, a period of one hundred and nine years, this island has been a constant resource to the community, offering at the same time, a cheerful abode to those of the Sisters, who require to recruit their strength, at the close of the scholastic year, as well as to others who seek quiet and retirement, to prepare for the close of their earthly pilgrimage, and the dawn of a brighter day. "He who tempers the wind, to the shorn lamb," could not withhold His mercies and His consolations, from those who clung, so lovingly, to His cross, despite poverty, privations and sufferings. Consequently, we cannot omit here, an incident closely connected with the conflagration of 1768, of which we have just spoken. "Every cloud," says the proverb, "has a silver lining." Let us see, how God recompenses those, who bear with submission and meekness, the crosses, He loves at times, to lay upon their shoulders.

Do you remember, dear reader, that touching ceremony which took place at the Congregation, in 1760, just a month after Sister Bourgeoys' death? that home festival when her heart was enshrined, in the midst of her children? for sixty years and more, it had been their joy, their consolation. A new generation had sprung up around it, happy in the inheri-

tance of her spirit, bequeathed to them by their elders. It was their treasure too, and when weary and overburdened, they sought there, counsel and direction. The night of that sad conflagration, when the flames had come and driven in their fury, the Sisters from their peaceful home, their first thought no doubt, was to save the precious relic, but alas ! it could not be done. It had been so ordained for the greater glory of God, and their own personal consolation. "Crosses," we know, "are blessings in disguise," the truth of these words, was tested now. In the moment of terror and danger, the Sisters had cast many a wistful look towards the spot, to them sacred, but now inaccessible, because of the crimson shades, that fell upon it. The sacrifice was made, and a sad *fiat*, pronounced. The following morning, upon returning to the scene of desolation, they saw that the fire was every where extinguished, except in one little spot; the bright red light was conspicuous amid the blackened walls. It was the finger of God, pointing out the mother's glory and her children's consolation. Drawing near, they saw, as it were, blood trickling down the stones; no tongue can express their amazement, they stood, riveted to the spot. They soon understood however, that it was a message to them, from Heaven. A message that her soul was glorious and immortal, in the realms of bliss. The Sisters hastened to inform their Father confessor of the miraculous event. Mr. Favard came at once, and witnessed the prodigy; stooping, he gathered with respect and veneration, the ashes dyed with her blood and then enclosed the treasure within a silver box, where it is still preserved.

Margaret Bourgeoys' heart ceased to beat in 1700, when she offered up her life, to save that of a beloved Sister; sixty-eight years later, this same heart bled anew, for the consolation of those who had walked, so faithfully, in her footsteps, those who were so worthy to be called her children. It would seem that she wished to remind them of her presence still, as if she said in imitation of her Divine Saviour:

"Behold! I am with you still,"  
"There is no death! what seems so, is transition ;  
"This life of mortal breath,  
"Is but a suburb of the life elysian,  
"Whose portal, we call death.  
"Let us be patient, these severe afflictions,  
"Not from the ground arise,  
"But oftentimes, celestial benedictions,  
"Assume this dark disguise."

Every year, when comes round the anniversary of Margaret Bourgeoys' sainted death, the Sister missionaries, who can conveniently do so, gather together at the Mother-House, to share in the holy joy, that prevades its precincts. It is a grand holiday for the entire institution. The convent chapel in festive attire, the altar resplendent with waxlights and pure white lilies ; the mellow tones of the organ, as they blend with the soft bird-like notes of the youthful novices, then the imposing attitude of some hundred Sisters bent in prayer. All strikes you forcibly, and as new depths are stirred up in the soul, every scene and every sound, seem to bring you some message of love from Heaven,

"One memory upon another, breaks in joy,  
"Like the pleased sea, on a white pebbled shore."

Then, when thanksgiving is over, and the morning repast ended, the bell summons you to the large community room, where every thing speaks to you of Margaret Bourgeoys ; a temporary altar is erected, and peering out amid lights, flowers and their dark green leaves, you see the beautiful white statue, which speaks of Heaven and its Virgin Queen. She stands there, her hands extended towards Margaret Bourgeoys' bust, placed at her feet, and as you gaze upon the silent marble, it brings back many thrilling memories connected with her love for Mary, and you feel that she is there, in a most fitting place, there under the benign look of her heavenly Mother, whose virtues, she so loved to imitate. A grade lower, within an exquisite little shrine, lies the silver box, which contains the ashes crimsoned with her life's blood.

This home festival, so replete with charming recollections for the sister, is a gala day, for all the pupils of the Congregation. It has ever been customary, for the young ladies of the boarding school, to offer their tribute of respect and filial love to her memory, by renewing on this day, scenes wherein the noble virtues she so loved to practice, act a prominent part—divine charity, in which she excelled, and which lent so sweet a charm to her daily intercourse with others, is never omitted, and for weeks previous to the event, youthful fingers are busily playing needles, transforming uncouth pieces of cotton, flannel and cloth, into neat little suits of clothing, which they intend to present to the destitute children, who attend the poor schools attached to the Congregation. This reunion generally takes place, in the afternoon of the 12th January. At a given hour, the friends and relatives of the pupils, assemble in the large hall of the community, and witness there one of the sweetest and most touching *scènes*, over which piety and charity can preside. With the harmonious sounds of piano, harp and organ, is heard the pattering of little feet, keeping time as they come, to the soft echoes heard all around. The pupils enter, leading by the hand, the youthful objects of their charity and commiseration. Joy is everywhere, the children advance as far as the little altar, and these under the eye of the Queen of Heaven, they present a parcel of clothing, and a large loaf of bread, to the extended hands beside them. It has been remarked that this distribution takes place, at the foot of Mary's statue, so that these poor children may understand, that they have received these gifts in the name, and as it were, from the bounty of their heavenly Mother. The bust of the pious foundress is there too, to remind them, that she is present in spirit with her children, and that she too, presides over this pious and innocent reunion. (1) These early lessons are never forgotten, and perhaps many a heart is indebted to these pleasing remembrances, for its steadfast faith, its perseverance in the

(1) These festive scenes have taken another form, within the last few years, that is, since the removal of the boarding school to Villa Maria, but it is only temporary; soon again, the mother house will be reunited to this cherished portion of Margaret Bourgeoys' work.

path which leads to perfect happiness. God has many, so many different ways of acting upon the human heart ; in the daily rounds of life, we meet many silent messengers of His holy will. A look, a word, a passing scene, nay, even a little flower, crushed to the ground, or on its stem, rejoicing by its beauty and its fragrance ; a something will come from it to our hearts, and gain us all at once. At the close of these exercises, a solemn benediction of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the convent chapel, at which all assist.

" Lights blaze,  
Like twinkling stars, among the flowers,  
And sweet incense burns."

Hearts are open, to receive the exquisite consolations which emanate from that fountain of untold bliss, the " Blessed Sacrament," while subdued strains of the organ are floating in the air, bearing up the soul from this earth's gloom, and rejoicing it with sweet visions of immortality.

" Those sounds come o'er the thrilling breast,  
E'en like the harp strings holiest measure,  
When dream the soul of lands of rest  
And everlasting pleasure."

(KNOX.)

Who has ever left the chapel at the close of benediction, without feeling stronger and better ? Soft echoes of the *O Salutaris Hostia*, or *Tantum Ergo*, will ring in your ears, for many an hour, and their soothing influence, will make you feel happy, in spite of a heavy heart, or a troubled spirit. Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament ! How our hearts thank Him, for all this, and what a flood of rapturous joy, submerges our souls, when we remember, that we are children of that One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, which contains all the treasures of his bountiful love, and exceeding great mercy. When we think, that we have been called to that faith, of which so many others are deprived, that it is ours to revel in heavenly delights, and bask in the effulgent rays of celestial beneficence. Ah dear reader, let us return thanks, by esteeming the privilege,

we enjoy ; look abroad, and count, if possible, the noble-minded beings, who are groving in the midst of darkness and error, without even the faintest gleam of that light, which we, alas ! oftentimes unheed. Why have we been chosen in preference to these ? Objects of divine predilection, let us respond to the call of Heaven, by the purity of our lives, and the fervor of our devotion, even though it be, but at the eleventh hour.

It is said, that the just shall live in eternal remembrance. Does it not seem so to you, dear reader, when you witness the benedictions, that accompany everywhere Margaret Bourgeoys' name ? 178 years have passed, since she closed her eyes, upon earthly scenes, and see, even here to-day, in this busy progressive age, her memory is cherished and venerated, as that of a loved one, who has just gone out from among us ; the magic of her name, has elated hearts with heroic impulses, to do something in the glorious cause of God. See its vivifying action, upon the generations, who have passed within these old gay walls since her death. They have passed—

" Like

" Perfumed zephyrs through summer leaves,"

The voice of her zeal, is not yet hushed, still, it calls  
Souls ! souls, again for Him, souls, to gain souls,  
That fewer may be lost, and they come, " creatures of  
Sunshine," to obey the summons.

" They rise,

From the gay banquet, and in scorn cast down,  
Pleasures up, the garland and the lute  
Of festal hours, for the veil and cross.

Becoming sterner tasks.

They have put on

Courage and faith, and generous constancy,

E'en as a breast-plate.

All look on them,

Moving in their beautiful array,

Of gentle fortitude, and bless the fair

Majestic vision, their un murmuring

Turn unto their heavy toils."

(HEMANS.)



## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINTH.

Reflections.—The heroic missionaries, who founded Ville-Marie.—Seminary of Saint Sulpice, Benefactor of Ville-Marie, to this day.—Progress of education, since the foundation of the colony.—Suburban schools, opened in the city, and placed under the direction of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame.—Attendance at these schools.—Number of missions, belonging to the Congregation of Notre-Dame.—Grand total of the pupils actually, attending these schools.

"Alas" exclaimed the Marshal of Luxemburg, on his death bed, "what will all my brilliant victories avail me, now, before the tribunal of that God, who is about to become my Judge?" "Ah! had I, instead of all these useless laurels, but the merit of a cup of cold water, given in His name!" It is thus, dear reader, that earthly grandeurs and earthly recompenses appear at the supreme moment, when the illusions of life vanish, and leave us face to face, with our deeds of good and evil, as God reads them, written there upon the unfading pages of the soul: "What will all my brilliant victories avail me. Ah! had I rather the merit of a cup of cold water, given in His name!" It is the sting of remorse, the shudder of despair, in face of a stern reality.

The experience of every day teaches us, that neither the pleasures, the honors, nor the riches of life, can give us happiness here below.

A momentary satisfaction there may be, in the possession of those goods, which the world calls blessings, in as much as they procure us at times, the means of doing good, and of being useful to others; but happiness to a human heart, they never brought; joy belongs not to earth, and with us mortals, its presence is like the meteors glare, it dazzles for a moment, when fades away,

"As for the mists of morning,  
Before the rising day."

The rapidity with which persons and things change, then disappear, convinces us, that earth is an exile, its pleasures ephemeral, its honors, passing shadows. Happy those, who awake to consciousness, ere they have been lured on, by the feigned reality. Happy those, who have loved stern wisdom's voice, and preferred her teachings to the syren's songs ; who have not waited until the delusive shows of life are gone, to weep over their folly. Life, the poet tells us, is like

"The flower, that smiles to-day,  
To-morrow dies,  
All that we wish to stay,  
Tempts, then flies."

(SHELLY.)

Such is life. No marvel then, that this truth, falling upon the minds of men, made there, deep impressions and led them to raise their thoughts and hearts on high, towards that blessed futurity, seen only in the mazy distance. *Sursum Corda* ! Our holy Mother the Church, never ceases to say, for she knows well, that the world's satellites, roam at will, through the varied walks of life, scattering their pernicious maxims, and empoisoning with their pestiferous breath, even the haunts of virtue. The Church will not, that her children should debase themselves, before the world's vaunted shrines. That those beyond her pale, should succumb, does not surprise ; poor deluded creatures ! they struggle that they may not see the light, hence, heavenly inspirations soften not their callous hearts ; they, have no salutary penance to preserve, no Blessed Eucharist to strenghten, no faith, in a heavenly mother's love, no loving trust, in their kind angel's protection. Ah ! the countless privations, to which they are subject, and withal, their moral virtues, strike us at times, with admiration ; their philanthropic views in the cause of their fellow creatures, lead them too, to the performance of magnanimous acts of courage and self denial, but alas ! earthly votaries, what will all their moral worth avail them ? a thousand times more meritorious, the cup of cold water, given in His name. The Creator alone, has a right to our lives, and to the acts thereof ;

we belong not to ourselves, not to the world, but to God ; and for this reason, when we act in accordance, with our own human views, when we seek our individual gratifications, we fail, because God is left out. Those acts, which tend neither to His honor, nor to His glory, may never receive a recompense. He accepts only, and holds in eternal remembrance, those deeds of ours, which prove grateful responses, to His merciful undying love. Ah ! who, here below, that has not some record, deeply graven upon memory's tablet, and enshrined as a sacred thing, within the heart's deep recesses. Some memento prized almost as one's own life, simply, because it is affection's offering. If then, this heavenly attribute love or charity, exercises so powerful an influence, upon poor weak mortals, what shall we say of its action upon the Sacred Heart of Jesus ! "Woman," did He once say, during the hours of His earthly pilgrimage, "woman, many sins are pardoned thee, because thou hast loved much." A whole life of sin and ingratitude effaced, because of one act of humble repentant love. Ah ! dear reader, admire the power of even a human effort, upon the Saviour's tender heart, then understand, why Saint Augustin says : "Love, and do what you please." And when these acts are daily multiplied, when they savor of humiliation, suffering and sacrifice, when they are performed through the purest motives of heroic love ; Ah ! who may recount the godly returns, bestowed by the Eternal Remunerator upon these faithful generous servants. He asks so little, and gives so much. The love of a human heart, the affections of His creatures, satisfy, if we may say so, the intensity of His divine ambition.

Angels and Saints have rejoiced on high, and their jubiliations have resounded throughout the heavenly Jerusalem, because here below, poor fragile creatures, had found out the means of loving God, as He wished them to love Him. Such dear reader, have been our reflections, as we gazed around and admired the wonderful ways of God, and sweet persuasions are ours, when benedictions and blessings attend our deeds ; we feel that they are a portion of that hundred fold, promised to

those, who respond to the Saviour's loving invitation. "Son, give me thy heart." In every age, the church has borne testimony to this truth, and this benign Mother, triumphs and exults, as she refers to the virtues, produced and practised within her bosom. History too, is there, pointing to the path in which they trod, those heroes of unshrinking faith, and super human energy, those saintly heroines, who came with their fragility and their love, to these western shores, that they might gain souls to God. Christian civilization, great, grand and glorious in its beginnings, how consoling and cheering in its spiritual progress.

More than once, these thoughts have brought back to us, some occurrence, connected with Margaret Bourgeoys' history. Convictions such as these, spurred her on, in the paths of zeal, abnegation and devotedness; convictions that exercised their salutary influence, upon the Saints of God, in every age. "The good liveth on." It lives in the continuation of their work; it lives in the spirit of sacrifice and heavenly zeal, perpetuated by their followers from age to age, age, even to this blessed hour. It lives in the manifold aspirations, that have ascended on high, from pious loving hearts; aspirations, that will continue to ascend, we trust, until time shall be no more, from the innumerable thousands, who have been sheltered, beneath the shadow of her tomb. Veneration, gratitude and love to those devoted self-sacrificing souls, who first came to these western shores! Veneration, gratitude, and love, to those who blessed the site of Ville-Marie and erected there, under Mount Royal's protecting shade, temples, to the worship of the Living God, sanctuaries of piety and learning for the children of future ages. None were forgotten, in those halcyon days. And oh! be it said to the eternal praise of a Sainted Olier, that it is to the generous activities of his Sons, to their princely liberalities, to their zeal and devotedness to the welfare of Ville-Marie, that Mary's chosen city, owes not only her birth, but her preservation too. Their brilliant fortunes, their talents, their very lives, were sacrificed in its interest. Many a noble ancestral name, was here consigned to oblivion; all that the world

seeks, esteems and honors, they buried here, when they came mid the wilds of Canada; but the remembrance of what they did and suffered, of what they still do, lives, will live eternally.

Thanks to their zeal, rich and poor, now enjoy the same advantages. To the antique boarding-school, founded by Margaret Bourgeoys, in 1681, have been added many others, academies and especially parochial schools, where thousands of destitute children, receive the benefits of a thorough moral training, and religious instruction. The free schools, attached to the different localities of the city, owe their foundation to the zealous efforts of a friend of youth; to one, who had long formed the design of erecting separate schools, for the catholic children of the city (1). The pious project was finally realized in 1839. Spacious buildings were erected, for this purpose, in different quarters, and the direction of those destined for the girls, was offered to the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame.

This proposition was accepted with joy; for the good work, being the direct aim of their institution, could not be otherwise than conformable to their desires. English and French classes were accordingly opened, and multitudes of children, of every age and size, hastened there, to receive lessons of science and virtue.

These spacious school-houses, are all the property of the gentlemen of Saint Sulpice, by whom they are furnished, heated and kept in repair. Children to the number of 5,345, are there instructed, in all the branches essential for their sphere of life.

The mother-house is rapidly increasing and extending; no matter, what the troubles and contradictions, may have been, Margaret Bourgeoys' work has never ceased. The great augmentation in the number of the Sisters, particularly in the novitiate, gave them means to increase their missions.

Besides the mother-house, and the free schools of the city,

(1) See, the little compendium, entitled: "Précis historique sur les petites écoles de la paroisse de Montréal," by the Honorable J. Viger.

Margaret Bourgeoys' Congregation of Notre Dame, comprises to-day, sixty flourishing missions.

Montreal alone, possesses two boarding schools, two largely attended Academies, four select schools, and several free-classes, giving a total for the city alone, of 6,186 children who receive instruction from the Sisters of the Congregation. "This institution," (1) remarks a writer, in his treatise on education "was the first founded in Canada, and for the space of 198 years, was the only educational establishment for young girls, in the city of Montreal. The Ladies of the Sacred Heart, were the first to come and share these arduous labors of instruction. They arrived in Canada, in the month of December, 1842. The following year, speaks of the foundation of the Longueuil establishment, under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy names of Jesus and Mary, others came in their turn, to take part in the good work, so happily commenced by Margaret Bourgeoys, and so perseveringly continued by her children. Not only did these primitive Sisters of the Congregation, take charge of the children of Ville-Marie and adjacent places, for the space of 189 years, but still more, they brought into the intimacy of their dwelling, young persons, whom they formed and prepared with every possible care, then sent them forth to put their lessons in practice, there, where their services might be needed. In consequence," he adds : "we may safely say, that the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, were the first who opened a Normal School in Canada, for the formation of teachers, and it was constantly kept up, notwithstanding the many privations and inconveniences, to which they were subject." As a proof of what we have said, we extract the following from a pastoral letter, written by Bishop de Saint Vallier, in 1687. He says :

"Besides the boarding and day schools, kept in their own house for the young girls of Montreal, the Sisters of the Congregation, have another establishment called the "House of Providence," where some twenty grown-up girls, are taught.

(1) Voir, "Mémorial sur l'éducation," par le Dr. Meilleur.

"all that it is necessary for their sex to know. Several teachers have also been formed here by the sisters, who sent them afterwards to different localities, to teach the children their catechism and prayers. They also give touching and useful instructions to persons of their sex, more advanced in years." These ambulatory missions, had many consoling results. It was principally at the period, destined as preparation for the first communion, that they took place, and when these secular teachers were insufficient for this important act, the Sisters themselves would go and spend two or three months in the country places, so that none should be deprived of these religious instructions. The pious foundress of the Congregation, was one of the most ardent promoters of this good work, and oftentimes, her zeal led her through woods and tangled paths, even to the farthest districts, below Quebec. Tradition has marked the spot in various places, where she and her followers exercised their truly apostolic mission. We ourselves, have gazed with veneration and love, upon a little corner of ground, in the garden of a distinguished citizen of Boucherville, where the incomparable Margaret Bourgeoys, gathered the children around her, during these ambulatory missions, to prepare them for their first communion. Ah ! in truth, we may exclaim with a pious author, who, when speaking of her glorious career of well-doing, says : "A name that should ever be pronounced in Canada with respect, love and admiration, is the name of Margaret Bourgeoys, the illustrious and incomparable foundress of the Congregation of Notre Dame."

We will now, show you, dear reader, the extension which Sister Bourgeoys' humble beginnings have taken, the number of missions under the direction of the Sisters of the Congregation, with the date of their foundation. But little can be said of the first missions, founded during the life time of the venerable foundress ; we know from tradition, that the first were established on the Island of Montreal, and others beyond its borders, as far back as 1676. In the letters written on the 6th August, this same year, by his Lordship, Bishop de Saint-Valier, we read : "Sister Bourgeoys and her companions have



"been occupied for the last few years, in teaching gratuitously " the little girls of Montreal and other localities." Most probably these first missions were, Champlain and Batiscan ; they continued flourishing for a number of years, that is, until circumstances connected with a cruel war, caused their suppression.

The mission of Champlain, founded in 1673, was interrupted in 1683, on account of the Iroquois' war ; reopened in 1702, it continued under the direction of the Sisters of the Congregation, until 1727, when the dilapidated state of the convent, refused absolutely to shelter the inmates. In 1788, the mission was completely abandoned, and the sisters transferred to " La Rivière Ouelle." Among the zealous missionaries, who sanctified their lives, in this, then distant mission, special mention is made of Sister Marie Ursula Charlotte Adeline de Lantagnac of Saint-Clare. She was the daughter of the most noble Gaspard de Lantagnac, remarkable for his saintly and brilliant career. She consecrated herself to God in Sister Bourgeoys' Congregation, at the age of nineteen, and died in her sixty-fourth year, in odor of sanctity, the 5th February, 1800, just a century after the pious foundress of the Congregation.

The oldest mission on record, is that of the " Holy Family," on the Island of Orleans, founded by Sister Bourgeoys, in 1683, consequently, this mission has existed for the space of 193 years. The site is most picturesque, and from its elevated position, commands a most delightful view of the surrounding parishes. The falls of Montmorency, cast their foaming waters into the magnificent expanse, that rolls below, while the steeple of " La Bonne Sainte Anne's " Church, is glistening in the distance. It is altogether an antiquated spot, whose solitude is charming. Number of pupils attending this convent school, 80.

Mission of " La Basse Ville, Quebec, founded in 1688, transferred later to Saint Roch's parish. (See St. Roch.)

Mission of Chateau Richer, Quebec, founded in 1689, closed during the war. The first convent still exists, and is occupied by the Sisters of the " Good Shepherd."

Pointe-aux-Trembles and Lachine, two oldest missions on the Island of Montreal, founded in 1690. Lachine no longer exists, Pointe-aux-Trembles still flourishing. Number of pupils, 172.

Records of the missions founded from 1690 to 1703, destroyed in the conflagration of 1768.

1703—Boucherville, in the diocese of Montreal, was for a number of years previous to its foundation, among the ambulatory missions, oftentimes visited, by the venerable foundress of the Congregation. This mission was a source of consolation, to the self-sacrificing sisters up to the year 1843, when their convent was destroyed by fire. This sad accident occurred in the month of June, towards evening. After leading their boarders, to the number of thirty-three, to a place of safety for the night, the sisters returned to their dwelling, when the danger had attained its utmost. At this moment, casting themselves upon their knees, and turning in the direction of Ville-Marie, they offered to God the sacrifice of their mission. This done, Sister Saint-Clare taking her crucifix as one inspired, threw it into the midst of the flames, begging of God, to save the village from further danger. Her prayer of faith and child-like simplicity, was almost instantaneously answered. The fire ceased, and the village was spared. The sisters, in a spirit of rare disinterestedness, distributed to the sufferers, all they had been able to save. God blessed their charity, the following year, their school was reopened, and this ancient mission, though not so flourishing as formerly, gives, notwithstanding, satisfaction to the entire parish. Number of pupils, 103.

1705—Laprairie.—The foundation of this mission dates from 1705. God blessed visibly the zeal and devotedness of the Sister Missionaries, who commenced this establishment, amid privations and sacrifices of every kind. A flourishing school attests this fact, and to-day, the convent gives instruction to 180 pupils.

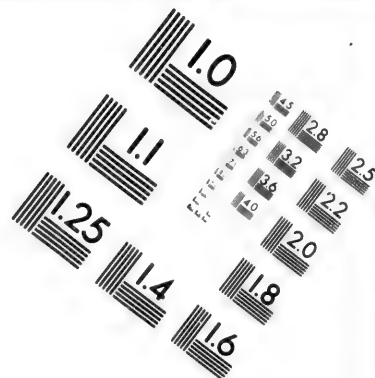
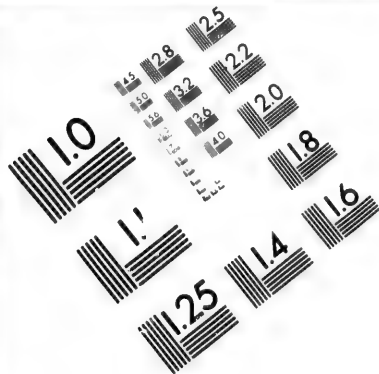
1713—Pointe aux Trembles de Québec.—This establishment is due to the liberalities of Mr. Dupont, who gave for this purpose, a large piece of land, taken off, of his own domain.

October 5th 1713. It was only two years later however, that the mission was firmly established, to the great satisfaction of the parishioners.—Number of pupils, 115.

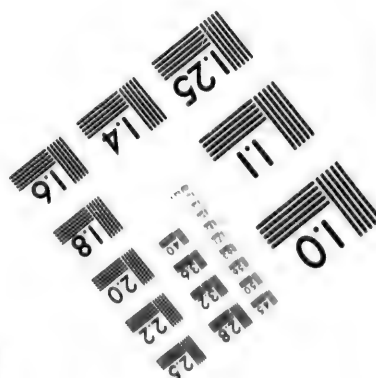
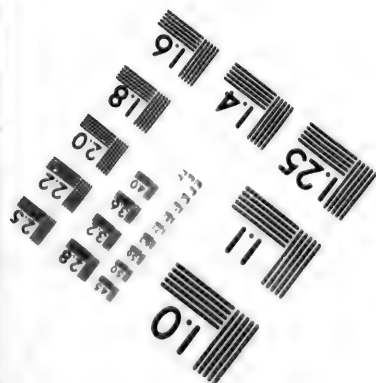
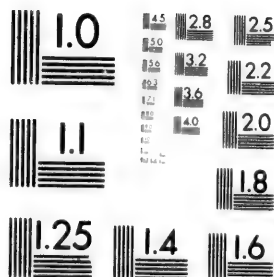
1720—Lake of Two Mountains.—This interesting indian mission, the first established by Sister Bourgeoys, and commenced by her, at the mountain in 1680, was transferred some years later, for the greater good of the colony to Sault au Recollet, where the Sisters continued their labors of love and zeal. They worked assiduously there, for the space of twenty years, practicing themselves, and teaching others, to practice the admirable virtues, which their foundress first taught upon Mount Royal's summit.

Finally in 1720, the mission was removed to a still greater distance from the city, and comprised at this time, some 900 souls of the Huron, Iroquois and Algonquin tribes. The young girls of these different nations were confided, as before, to the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. This mission has been the theatre of many noble sacrifices, and more than one young Sister, forgot here, in the midst of her uncouth pupils, not only her high lineage, and the joys and honors, to which she might pretend; but, still more, identified her very life, in its devotedness, with the life of the forest child, the mother tongue remained unheeded, and its familiar accents gave place, to the more poetic expressions of the child of nature, so strong and deep was that zeal, which would gain souls to God. The number of indian children attending the mission school, has decreased considerably, within the last few years. Our progressive age, has penetrated to these still borders of the Ottawa, and civilization has taken from the indian maiden, not only her native garb, but also her native simplicity. The number of pupils attending the mission school of the "Lake of Two Mountains, is now reduced to about 40, in constant attendance.

1763—Saint François du Sud, Quebec.—The mission of Chateau Richer, established by the pious foundress of the Congregation, in 1689, a few years previous to her death, was closed during the war. It was never re-established, but



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some years later, transferred to the Parish of Saint François du Sud. In 1767, Sister Margaret Piot de Langloiserie of Saint Hippolyte, at that time, Superior of the Congregation, named two Sisters, for the foundation of this mission. In the letter of introduction, which her zeal, charity and motherly solicitude induced her to write, upon this occasion, she says :

" *Reverend Sir*,—Your pious desires are finally accomplished. " The dear Sisters who remit this letter, to you, will assure you " at the same time, of the entire satisfaction, we experience, to " share with you, the labors and merits of the present under- " taking.

" We are extremely grateful to you, Reverend Sir, for having " procured us, the means of doing good in your parish. What " interior joy, should fill the hearts of those, who are chosen to " lay the foundations of a mission, where so much good can " be done.

" I flatter myself, that you will not refuse our dear Sisters, " the advice and counsel, of which they stand so much in need. " With your charitable assistance, God will be, indeed, known, " loved, and faithfully served, in this new mission." And He did bless the zeal and fervor of these first missionaries. Others, have walked since then, in the path they trod, and the mission of Saint François du Sud, still retains much of that primitive simplicity, which distinguished the first years of its foundation. The number of pupils at the present moment, 83.

1783—Mission of Saint Denis, (Diocese of St. Hyacinthe).—This mission, established in the course of the year 1783, has always retained its primitive spirit. The first Sisters, who labored there, must have been the recipients of many special graces and blessings, for their work was nobly done. The flourishing institution, which still adorns this parish, attests the spirit of religion, which they so well imprinted within the hearts of their pupils ; spirit, which the parents have transmitted, with pride, to their children.—Number of pupils, 135.  
1784—Mission of Pointe Claire, (Diocese of Montréal).—

The mission of Lachine, was suppressed in 1784, because of a great decrease in the population, and the Sisters employed there, transferred their establishment to Pointe Claire. This mission is most agreeably situated, on the shores of the Saint Lawrence, but a short distance from the city of Montreal. A large and spacious convent has been recently erected, and a juvenile population of some 130, enlivens the natural tranquillity of the spot.

1809—Mission of La Rivière Ouelle, (Diocese of Quebec).—The foundation of this mission, dates from 1809. It is still flourishing, notwithstanding the numerous houses of education, by which it is surrounded.—Number of pupils, 93.

1823—Sainte-Marie de la Beauce, (Diocese of Quebec).—This mission was established in 1823, at the price of incredible hardships and privations.—Number of pupils, 146.

1825—Mission of Berthier, (Diocese of Montreal).—This establishment dates from 1825. The school is flourishing, and offers instruction to 186 pupils.

1826—Mission of Terrebonne, (Diocese of Montreal).—Opened in 1826.—Number of pupils, 165.

1833—Mission of Saint Eustache, (Diocese of Montreal).—This mission, dates from 1833.—Number of pupils, 123.

1841—Mission of Kingston, (Diocese of Kingston, Upper Canada).—This establishment dates from 1841. The first Sister missionaries bore many heavy crosses, ere they succeeded, in their praise worthy undertaking. A few years later, they were recompensed for their past toils and privations, by the assurance that God had blessed their endeavors. A flourishing school attests the fact, and some 450 pupils, drink here of the "stream of science," as it flows.

1844—Mission of Chateauguay, (Diocese of Montreal).—This mission was established in 1844. Though not so flourishing as formerly, still there are in constant attendance, some 87 pupils.

1844—Mission of the Cedars, (Diocese of Montreal).—This mission, opened in 1844, offer instruction at the present day to 90 pupils.



1844—Mission of Saint Roch, (Diocese of Quebec).—This mission, first established in the Lower Town, Quebec, and one of the most ancient belonging to the Congregation, occupied until the year 1844, the site, formerly purchased by Sister Bourgeoys. It was, for many years, under the direction of one of the first companions of the pious foundress, Sister Marie Raisin, whose religious career was cut short by death in 1688; she was in her thirtieth year. In 1844, the boarding-school was transferred to its present site, in Saint Roch's Parish. This removal brought numberless advantages to the mission, not only as regards the pupils, but also the course of instruction, which comprises to-day, every useful and agreeable branch. One hundred pupils form the boarding-school of this mission, besides a day-school frequented by some three hundred. An external school for the children of the poorer classes, to the number of five hundred and sixty-eight, forming a total of 968 pupils, united in the same building. There are twenty-seven Sisters here, under the direction of a local Superior, all depending, however, upon the Mother-House in Montreal.—968.

1847—Mission of Saint Theresa, (Diocese of Montreal).—Established in 1847.—Average attendance, 164.

1847—Mission of the Assumption, (Diocese of Montreal).—Established in 1847.—Number of pupils, 171.

1847—Mission of Saint John's, (Diocese of Montreal).—Established in 1847.—Number of pupils, 468.

1848—Mission of "La Baie Saint Paul," (Diocese of Quebec).—Established in 1848.—Number of pupils, 164.

1849—Mission of Saint Croix, (Diocese of Quebec).—Established in 1849.—Number of pupils, 120.

1852—Mission of Yamachiche, (Diocese of Three Rivers).—Established in 1852.—Number of pupils, 119.

1855—Mission of Chambly, (Diocese of Montreal).—Established in 1855.—Number of pupils, 160.

1855—Mission de Sainte Anne de la Pérade, (Diocese of Three Rivers).—Established in 1855.—Number of pupils, 172.

1855—Mission of Rimouki, (Diocese of Rimouski).—Established in 1855.—Number of pupils, 168.

- 1856—Mission of Saint Sauveur, (Quebec).—Established in 1856.—Number of pupils, 649.
- 1856—Mission of Kamouraska, (Diocese of Quebec).—Established in 1856.—Number of pupils, 100.
- 1856—Mission of Arichat, (Diocese of Arichat). — Established in 1856.—Number of pupils, 200.
- 1857—Mission of Sherbrooke, (Diocese of Sherbrooke).—Established in 1857.—Number of pupils, 431.
- 1857—Mission of Charlottetown, (Diocese of Charlottetown).—Established in 1857.—Number of pupils, 213.
- 1857—Mission of Sorel, (Diocese of St. Hyacinthe).—Established in 1857.—Number of pupils, 568.
- 1860—Mission of Bourbonnais, Illinois, (Diocese of Chicago).—Established in 1860.—Number of pupils, 130.
- 1862—Mission of Huntingdon, (Diocese of Montreal).—Established in 1862.—Number of pupils, 40.
- 1863—Saint Joseph's, (Charlottetown). — Established in 1863.—Number of pupils, 219.
- 1863—Mission of Acadiaville, (Diocese of Arichat).—Established in 1863.—Number of pupils, 100.
- 1864—Mission of Miscouche, (Diocese of Charlottetown).—Established in 1864.—Number of pupils, 67.
- 1865—Mission of Peterborough, (Diocese of Kingston).—Established in 1865.—Number of pupils, 120.
- 1865—Mission of Williamstown, (Diocese of Kingston).—Established in 1865.—Number of Pupils, 123.
- 1865—Mission of Kankakee, Illinois, (Diocese of Chicago).—Established in 1865.—Number of pupils, 264.
- 1868—Mission of Ottawa, (Diocese of Ottawa).—Established in 1868.—Number of pupils, 120.
- 1868—Mission of Tignish, (Diocese of Charlottetown).—Established in 1868.—Number of pupils, 142.
- 1868—Mission of Summerside, (Diocese of Charlottetown).—Established in 1868.—Number of pupils, 143.
- 1868—Mission of Saint Athanase, (Diocese of St. Hyacinthe).—Established in 1868.—Number of pupils, 119.
- 1869—Mission of Saint Christophe d'Arthabaska, (Diocese

of Three Rivers).—Established in 1869.—Number of pupils, 130.

1869—Mission of New Castle, (Diocese of Chatham, N. B.)—Established in 1869.—Number of pupils, 107.

1869—Mission of Waterbury, (Diocese of Hartford, Conn.).—Established in 1869.—This convent is most agreeably situated on an eminence. Its extensive play grounds are tastefully ornamented with forest trees and shrubbery, and although it is in the midst of a city, it enjoys the beauty and the seclusion of the country.—Number of pupils, 154.

1870—Mission of Saint Albans, Vermont, (Diocese of Burlington).—Established in 1870.—This mission, founded the 17th of February, 1870, has many dear and interesting associations connected with its past. Those of our readers, who are familiar with the touching details, concerning the "Young Converts" or "The three Sisters," will no doubt be gratified to hear, that this convent of Saint Albans, was their elegant residence at the time of their death. Helen, the second of these Sisters, and the first, for whom "the silver cords of life" were snapt assunder, died in Fairfield, the 29th of October, 1858. Five or six months later, the two others followed. The apartment, which the young apostle "Debbie" loved to call "her room," and from which her pure soul, winged its flight on high, was converted into the convent Chapel; the Sanctuary occupying the spot, where her inanimate form, "lovely still in death," told in its own mute eloquence, how dearly she had prized her gift of Faith.

In the adjoining room, Anna closed her eyes to earthly scenes, and went with her eighteen summers, to mingle in the angelic choirs.

More than three hundred children, listen now in this "pleasant retreat," to the oft repeated tale of "the three Sisters" and the heroic steadfastness, which won for them an eternal crown.—Number of pupils, 340.

1871—Mission of Bathurst, (Diocese of Chatham, N. B.).—Established in 1871.—Number of pupils, 72.

1873—Mission of Bellevue, (Diocese of Quebec).—Established in 1873.—Number of pupils, 120.

1873—Mission of Saint Romuald, (Diocese of Quebec).—Established in 1873.—Number of pupils, 340.

1874—Mission of Caraquet, (Diocese of Chatham, N. B.).—Established in 1874.—Number of pupils, 95.

1874—Mission of Saint Louis, (Diocese of Chatham, N. B.).—Established in 1824.—Number of pupils, 64.

1875—Mission of Joliette, (Diocese of Montreal).—Established in 1875.—Number of pupils, 228.

1877—Magdalen Islands, (Diocese of Charlottetown).—Established in 1877.—Number of pupils, average attendance 60.

1877—Mission of Saint Aubert, (Diocese of Quebec).—Established in 1877.—Number of pupils, 89.

#### ACADEMIES AND DAY SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF MONTREAL.

1860—Saint Denis Academy, (St. Denis Street).—Established in 1860.—Number of pupils, 236.

1864—Saint Anthony's Academy, (Lagauchetiere Street).—Established in 1864.—Number of pupils, 227.

Notre-Dame School, attached to the Mother House, affords instruction to 176 pupils.

Bonsecours School, 233 pupils.

Saint Patrick's School, 450 pupils.

Saint Joseph's School, 582 pupils.

Saint Lawrence School, 660 pupils.

Visitation School, (Quebec Suburb).—800 pupils.

Saint Anthony's School, 285 pupils.

Saint Gabriel's School, 364 pupils.

Saint Mary's School, (pied du Courant Ste. Marie).—224 pupils.

Saint Ann's School, 478 pupils.

Saint Felix School, 162 pupils.

School of the Sacred Heart, (Ontario Street).—600 pupils.

Saint Paul's School, 100 pupils.

These Schools, most generally, take the name of the locality in which they are situated.

There are branches of the Congregation of Notre Dame of Montreal, in fourteen different dioceses.

Diocese of Montreal, .. .. .	18 missions.
" of Saint Hyacinthe, .. .. .	3 "
" of Sherbrooke, .. .. .	2 "
" of Quebec, .. .. .	14 "
" of Kingston, .. .. .	3 "
" of Ottawa, .. .. .	1 "
" of Three Rivers, .. .. .	3 "
" of Rimouski, .. .. .	1 "
" of Arichat, .. .. .	2 "
" of Charlottetown, P. E. I., ..	6 "
" of Chatham, .. .. .	4 "
" of Chicago, .. .. .	2 "
" of Burlington, .. .. .	1 "
" of Hartford, Conn., .. .. .	1 "

61 missions.

Number of pupils, receiving instruction, in the different missions of the Congregation, .. .. .	9,898.
Number of pupils, attending the schools, in the city of Montreal alone, .. .. .	6,186.
Grand total of the pupils under the direction of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, ..	16,084.

#### BOARDING SCHOOL OF VILLA MARIA.

The house with its beautiful grounds, once known as Monklands, was for some years, the elegant residence of Lord Elgin. It became the property of the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, in 1854, period which marks the foundation of this flourishing institution. Two spacious wings, have been added to the first substantial edifice, and the whole fitted up, in a style elegant and comfortable. Thanks to the untiring activity, and to the constant devotedness of the noble minded woman, who presided at its birth, and who watched over its daily development, nothing has been left undone. Our readers, will here recall, no doubt, the gentle dignity, the affability,

the unassuming modesty of the ever to be regretted Sister "The Nativity," whose earthly career, was cut short by the angel of death, some years ago. This worthy daughter of Margaret Bourgeoys, traced the path, wherein others could continue her life of usefulness, so fruitful in happy results. No advantages are withheld, from the growing youth who now assemble within Ville Marie's spacious halls; there, they are taught the real object of their lives, here below; there, the duties of later years, are considered as sacred things, upon the conscientious accomplishment of which, depend earthly happiness, and earthly felicity. Twenty-seven sisters reside in this beautiful mountain home, each performing her allotted part, in the religious and moral training of some 180 pupils, confided to their care.

#### MOUNT SAINT MARY.

The magnificent building, now known, as Mount Saint Mary's boarding school, was at first a school or college, belonging to the anabaptists. It passed into the hands of the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu, and was fitted up by them, for an hospital, destined to receive English and Irish patients. Towards the close of this same year, it was again sold, and finally became the property of the Sisters of the Congregation, who transferred there the boarding school, which until then, had been attached to the mother house. The site occupied by this convent, is one of the finest in the city of Montreal, and commands an extensive view of the River Saint Lawrence, and the surrounding country. Twenty-six sisters are attached to this institution, and preside, over a juvenile population of nearly two hundred.

If proof were necessary, dear reader, to justify the incessant benedictions, which Heaven has showered upon the work, so happily commenced by Margaret Bourgeoys, and upon the efforts and labors of those who have continued this same work; the numbers who throng unceasingly to the venerated shades of her Congregation, will tell far better, than our imperfect words, how true the assertion made by the Queen of Heaven, to her well-beloved child, some 226 years ago, when she said, "Go, and I will never abandon you."

Margaret Bourgeoys, faithful to the inspiration then received, accomplished her mission, and as Our holy Mother was called, or rather predestined, to assist in establishing the Church ; so Margaret Bourgeoys in imitating her, was instrumental in the same way, as regards the Church of Ville-Marie, and to use the words of an impartial writer : “ Her Congregation, from the very beginning of the colony, has been a source of many invaluable services, but in no manner perhaps, more efficaciously, than by devotion to the Queen of Heaven,” and is it not true, that when the heart has made, its resolves to be entirely to God, it first turns towards Mary ! She is the means, by which souls are gained to God, and this was Sister Bourgeoys’ highest ambition, to lead hearts to Jesus by Mary. Bossuet, in one of his sermons upon the glorious Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, says ; “ Mary was given to the Church after Our Lord’s Ascension, that she might be the shield, the rampart, and the consolation of the faithful of that time. She forgot not, that upon Calvary, she had been named the Mother of all mankind, and in the person of the beloved disciple, she adopted us all, for her children. The image of her Divine Son, was revealed to her, in His members, and in the hearts of all those who suffered or who were oppressed, she insinuated, as it were, her own powerful and pure heart, so that her intentions and her sentiments, might, in unison with theirs, implore pardon and mercy. She acted by the Apostles, when they announced the Gospel, to those who knew it not ; she was with the martyrs, when they sealed their faith, with their heart’s blood ; she is ever with the faithful, to inspire them with love for the precepts of her Divine Son, to listen to his counsels, to imitate his examples.” “ Sister Bourgeoys’ life,” says a distinguished writer, “ is a remarkable proof of this same influence, exercised by the Blessed Virgin, in the formation of the Church. We behold every day, incontestable marks, evidences of her powerful intercession, of her secret operations with the Holy Spirit, in procuring means, to transmit the gift of faith, throughout the entire world.” Again, it was



upon one of those feasts, so dear to the children of Mary, "The Festival of the Rosary," that the image of her invincible protectress, struck her sight, so sweetly and so efficaciously,—touched her heart,—changed her entire being, and enkindled within her soul, the spirit of apostolic zeal, that became more and more ardent, each successive day; spirit which finally inspired her, with the heroic design, of sacrificing her home, her country, so as to contribute towards establishing the reign of Jesus Christ, within the hearts of the savage hordes of Canada. Then, as a last proof, that this astonishing vocation, was really and truly her work, this incomparable Virgin, deigns to appear in a visible manner to Sister Bourgeoys, and confirms all that had transpired, by the words that fall from her lips: "Go and

"I will never abandon you." "And I knew, writes the Sister, "that it was the Blessed Virgin, for her presence "and her words, filled me with courage and nothing, after that, "seemed to me impossible or difficult." From this, we must infer, that the ardent zeal for the sanctification of souls, which animated Sister Bourgeoys and her first companions, was the result of that hidden power, that secret influence, exercised by this heavenly Mother, upon their hearts.

This devotion to the Blessed Virgin, which constitutes the life of the Congregation, not only contributes to give pious inclinations, and an increase of faith to the catholic pupils of this institution; but still more, it is a means made use of, by Divine Goodness, to bring into the true fold, members, who live beyond her pale. No doubt, dear reader, you will here recall, many touching ceremonies of this kind, that brought joy and consolation to the hearts of Jesus and Mary. Happy moments, when a loved companion, came to kneel at the common altar, to receive there, the gift of faith, and share in the graces and blessings, obtained by all, in answer to the voice of prayer. Others too, betimes, have come and knelt beside their children, and received with them the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist, and deplored in the words of the great Saint Augustin, to have known too late, that God so ancient and yet so new.

## CHAPTER THIRTIETH.

Conclusion.—Contrast between the past and present of the Congregation.—Sister Marie Barbier, second Superior of the Congregation of Notre-Dame.—Notes on some other pious members of this institution.—Poetry.—Villa-Maria.—Devotion to Margaret Bourgeoys' memory at the present day.

In concluding a little work, which has indeed been to us a labor of love, we regret that circumstances will not allow us to add some other pages, concerning the results of Sister Bourgeoys' examples, of her noble and heroic virtues. A pen more experienced than ours, may one day perhaps, trace other scenes of interest, incident to the work of grace, within the souls of many, whom the world would fain have claimed, but who, lured on by her examples, burst asunder the fetters that bound them to earthly pleasures, that they might taste the bliss promised, even here below, to those, who take up their cross, to follow their Divine Master. Were we only to give a faint sketch of the first pupil of the Congregation, of that Marie Barbier, the first professed Sister, and later, the first to succeed the Venerable foundress in the government of the Congregation, it would be a glorious evidence, of how perfectly the able hands of Margaret Bourgeoys, formed her children, that she might gain them to God. Hers, was a noble beginning, the child of fifteen summers, who came to consecrate, at this early age, her heart to God.

It was the first oblation, that Ville-Marie laid upon the Altar of sacrifice. Even at this tender age, the child of predilection, seemed to understand the real import of the step she had taken, and sometime later, alluding to this event, she says, "When I entered the novitiate of the Congregation, it seemed to me, that my companions were all Saints, and that it was rashness on my part, to associate myself with so many holy souls. I was completely won, by their humility and deep spirit of mortification." Sister Marie Barbier's mission, was:

somewhat different from that of the venerable foundress. She, was spared the trials and interior struggles, attending an extraordinary vocation, the privations of an unknown stranger clime ; and withal, we perceive in the youthful Sister, from the beginning of her religious career, the same spirit of mortification, the same love of penance, the same wonderful humility, the same spirit of generous, confiding abandon, into the arms of Jesus and Mary. Named a few years only, after her profession, to occupy the charge of Assistant to the pious foundress of the Congregation, she offered herself to God, upon this occasion, as a victim, destined to suffer and to perform all that He should ordain.

She expressed as follows. the sentiments of her heart.

“ O my God ! through pure love for Thee, and to accomplish all the designs, Thou hast upon Thy unworthy servant, because of Thy love for this poor miserable creature, permit that I should offer myself to Thee, as a victim willing and ready to suffer, all that thou desirest I should suffer, for time and for eternity. Let me die, as becomes my infamy and my misery, in the disgrace of all men, and deprived of every comfort and assistance. I abandon myself to all kinds of humiliations, to the scorn and privations, attending all sorts of death, that I may expiate thereby the multitude of sins, that are committed each instant in the world. I would live, only to suffer in my body and in my soul, every interior and exterior pain, that Thou may'st wish to send me. To Thee I consecrate my will, so that obedience may be my sole guide ; and for Thy love, I willingly sacrifice every spiritual consolation, those of earth, and those of Heaven.”

Four months only after having made this offering to God, she was elected by the Sisters, to replace Sister Bourgeoys, in the government of the Congregation ; that moment, she gave herself up to the practice of austerities and mortifications, the recital of which, would prove incredible, were it not attested by eye witnesses, worthy of faith. These excessive penances, were condemned by her directors, and the obedient Sister, yielding to their will, allowed herself to be guided in this

matter, as they thought best. God was moved. He came now in answer to her primitive desire, and completely overwhelmed her, with interior trials of every kind. "Oh! how can we suffer so much, and not die!" she cries. "I am like a person suspended in the air, who touches neither Heaven, nor earth. I crave for the food of Angels, and the more I unite myself to God, in the Holy Communion, the more ardent, becomes my desire to receive Him. I am dying of hunger, and my whole being, is parched up, as it were, with this burning desire. My soul sighs for divine union, and I seek my God, by a path that I know not. The profound interior desolation, in which I live, occupies me unceasingly; God alone, is my all, and without Him, Heaven or hell is indifferent to me." Then came fearful maladies, brought on by her rigorous penance, and after the unsuccessful treatments, that seemed only to increase her patience and resignation, she writes: "God will not suffer that the slightest consolation should rejoice my heart, I adore His conduct towards me, and bow submissively to His holy will."

"Our sisters wish to divert me, from what they consider my great trials, but my soul has no need of these distractions. God alone, no earthly consolation, He dwells in the depths of my heart, then, what matter, what my privations may be, He suffices, and I am content."

At a later period, speaking to the young sisters who surrounded her, with that accent of faith, that marked her every word, she says: "To teach the young, was ever my dearest inclination, when thus occupied, I seem to see our Divine Lord walking before me, inviting me to follow Him, through the city and the country places, seeking out souls to save. I see, too, our Blessed Mother, gathering up the words of life, that fall from the lips of her Divine Son, treasuring them up in her heart, to distribute them, with motherly affection, to those who assist at her lessons, with confidence and love."

Sister Marie Barbier, was no less zealous within the precincts of her community, where her examples were a powerful stimu-

lant to the practices of regularity and fervor. "I enjoy perfect tranquillity and peace of mind, in humility and obedience, and I cannot imagine how a sister, can refuse anything to a superior, who holds the place of God, and who represents the Blessed Virgin. Oftentimes in the occupations the least to my taste, I have encountered extraordinary assistance and success, simply because I acted through a spirit of obedience. Replace a sister in her office, accept the humiliations and crosses that fall each day to our lot, not only with resignation, but, if possible, not to allow the slightest alteration in our features to betray the emotions within, or rather, to be willing to do all things at all times, should be the maxim of a sister of the Congregation of Notre Dame."

Named for the third time, assistant to the superior, she writes: "I feel more than ever, a want to abandon myself totally and unreservedly to God, to be submissive in all things, notwithstanding the repugnances of nature; to consider myself no more, than I would a beast of burden, who allows itself, to be conducted hither and thither, without evincing the slightest dissatisfaction. Still, at times, it seems to me, that it would be better, if I occupied some other office than that of assistant; but after all, this, as well as the rest, should be indifferent to me. What matter, where I am employed, whether it is in the garret or in the cellar, in the country or in the city. I am only fit, for the vilest and the lowest occupations in the house. I offer myself to be the servant of all, so that our sisters, may have the means and the facility of performing better, than I could do, occupations of greater importance."

It was thus, that this worthy pupil and companion of Sister Bourgeoys, put in practice, the lessons and the examples of her pious foundress. The last years of her life, were adorned by those hidden virtues, that God inspires, when He wishes to reserve for Himself alone, the love and merits of a privileged soul. Sister Marie Barbier survived Sister Bourgeoys, thirty-nine years, and persevered in her primitive fervor, until she breathed her last, in the seventy-seventh year of her age, leav-

ing, with her sixty-two years of religious profession, a singular reputation of sanctity, and a sentiment of profound veneration for her memory.

How many more, we might mention, not only of these primitive virtues, but others that we encounter, as we descend the stream of years. Noble examples, placed here and there, to encourage generations, as they pass by, and hand down to posterity, incontestable evidences of the greatness of Margaret Bourgeoys' mission, and her fidelity and devotedness in corresponding to the call of grace. Oh ! how we prize those beautiful household traditions, that are brought down to us, by venerable ancients, who well know the worth of the examples they contain ; they, who have been eyewitnesses to prodigies of sanctity, and who have felt their hearts exult, with the deepest emotions of respect and admiration, when miraculous answers were given, to the confiding fervent prayers of these servants of God. How many have sanctified the soil we tread ! So pure and holy seem their lives, that we fancy for an instant, we are still perusing the revered pages, which chronicle to us, the virtues and the heroisms of the incomparable foundress ; and yet, they are only her children, her followers, who hold sacred the path she traced, and upon whose ears, the echoes of 1700, still seem to fall.

" Be ye my imitators, as I imitated Jesus Christ." Ah ! how we love to recall memories of that other pious sister, who bore the name of her venerable Mother ; that other Saint Margaret, whose childlike innocence and piety, was only equalled by her ardent love for God. Her frequent visits to this sole object of her love, who tells us again and again from the Tabernacle, " that His delights are to dwell, with the children " of men," did not in any way diminish the labor of each day. Occupied at her spinning wheel, she would run every now and then, to say " just a little word " to her Divine Saviour, and notwithstanding these interruptions, her quantity of work each evening, equalled, and oftentimes surpassed, that of her companions. And, who could refrain from paying a tribute of admiration, to the memory of that other humble Sister, who

bore the name of Saint Suzanne, and whose sole earthly ambition, was to love her God, and sanctify her soul, by the performance of the vilest and the lowest occupations in the community; who sought the contempt of her fellow-creatures, with more eagerness, than the votaries of the world, seek its honors and its glories. Her whole life, was one act of humility, her spirit of abnegation knew no bounds, while her mortification and her charity, rendered her the worthy rival of her Mother and foundress. And how many more, we might mention here, whose angelic lives ravished, we may say, the heart of God. Those models of the interior life, whose very existence, was rapt up in God's goodness, His mercy, and His love, We see them still, remnants of the past, whose every act tells us, thrilling tales of times, that are no more. They move among us, in that slow and measured pace, which speaks of accumulated years; and as we gaze upon these venerable ancients, whose brows are bent, 'neath the snows of seventy and eighty years, as we meet the kindly smile, and hear the friendly word, we feel more than ever convinced, that a hale old age, spent in the service of God, is indeed "the majestic dome of human life. He has made of it, a sanctuary of wisdom and of justice, a tabernacle of the purest truths, and of the most precious experiences."

Margaret Bourgeoys, formed her children, to a confiding, childlike simplicity, in their devotions to Jesus and to Mary. It is indeed a pleasing sight, to behold these venerable messengers, who bring to us the customs of their elders, performing those little acts, of minute importance, perhaps, to the observer, but nevertheless, infinitely precious, because of the source from which they spring. "The loving good night and the salutation, so replete with faith and veneration, when they pass before the white statue of their heavenly protectress and Mother, as they retire to their night's rest, remind us of the Blessed Stanislas Kostka, who knelt and asked the Virgin Mother's benediction, each time, that her loved image met his eye. No wonder, that Mary favors these outpourings of loving hearts. No marvel, that, when gazing upon these



antique tableaux, which represent so perfectly, the life and the virtues of the pious foundress, her children's children, should feel aglow within them, the poet's sacred fire, and burst forth, into burning songs of love and admiration. It was thus, with that favored and fervent child of Mary, who, when listening with an enraptured ear, to the details of Margaret Bourgeoys' life, cried out, on one of the anniversaries of her sainted death.

"Why meet we here to-day ? Why gather thus,  
"The old and young, the parent and the child,  
"Is it a festal day ? Has some bright beam  
"Of Heaven's glory, fallen on our land,—  
"That midst the boding cry of warlike men,  
"Our hearts are gladsome, and our souls at peace !  
"Go, ask the countless Huron, who have slept  
"Their last sleep, 'neath the banner of the cross.  
"Ask of the wild Iroquois.—Ask too, the  
"Sainted dead. "What means this festive scene !"  
"Like the soft breath of summer air ; the name  
"Of one we love, in answer, floats around.

"'Tis now, more than two hundred years ago,—  
"Was born in sunny France, she, whose memory  
"We celebrate to-day. Thrice favored child !  
"Scarce had the saving waters, bathed thy brow,  
"Than Jesus, claimed thy pure young infant heart.  
"Marg'ret Bourgeoys ! See, from earth we hail thee,  
"As blessed thrice—in childhood, youth and age.  
"Yes, she was blest.—Her infancy but passed,  
"And look, how cluster round her—youthful crowds  
"Their prattling tongues, speak sweetly of the Babe,  
"Who came on earth, a little child for them.  
"And, at his name, each baby brow bows low,  
"Thus childhood passes. In the walks of men  
"She moves an angel ; pure and undefiled.  
"She hath drunk deep, of sorrows bitter cup.  
"A mother's loss, she wept ; and few years pass,  
"When death again, a cherished parent takes.  
"But, ere the soft hands of his patient child,  
"Hath closed those loving eyes, the father kneels,  
"That to the God who claimed it, hath been given,  
"Her soul's pure love, her girlhood's spotless heart.  
"And thus it chanced to be, if chance there is,  
"In aught ordained by Him, who rules the world.

"It was the Sunday of the Rosary—  
"And in procession meet, Saint Dominick's sons,  
"Were chaunting praise to Her, their founder loved.  
"Soon were they joined, by the fair city's youth,  
"And slowly passed, the church of Notre Dame,  
"Where, in a niche, the noted statue stood,  
"Of Mary, bearing her Infant Son.  
"As Margaret walks along, her eyes are raised  
"To the mild face, she oft hath watched before.  
"Why starts she? Is there ought to frighten her?  
"No! no! for joy beams from every feature.  
"But she walks, as in a dream! see! she falls,  
"With lifted earnest gaze, at Mary's feet.  
"Ah mother! Thou couldst tell us, thou dost know  
"What means that rapturous face, those radiant eyes,  
"Thou must have smiled on her, sweet Virgin Queen.  
"And she nigh died of love! As she, we ask—  
"With yearning hearts, that we may one day die!  
"Thou must have whispered to her inmost soul.  
"And it nigh fled away—with thy sweet breath,  
"Back to the Infant God,—who looked on her,  
"With eyes divine, too bright for mortal gaze!  
"Long knelt she thus, and when at length she rose,  
"A change had settled on her youthful face.  
"Ah! Margaret, thou hast been too near to God,  
"To care again for earth, or earthly garb,  
"Which thou hadst until now, too dearly prized.  
"Thus came religion's call—and from that hour,  
"One thought alone, possessed that christian maid.  
"Now, in a cloister, bearing Mary's name,  
"She could devote her youth, her life to God  
"There, as daughters now, she earnest seeks.  
"Not there! not there! does Heaven's finger point!  
"Vainly she strives a holy house to found,  
"Still! still! her guiding star moves slowly on,  
"Where rests it? See, far on in years to come,  
"It hovers o'er a stable, as of old  
"It marked the spot, where Mary might be found.  
"Tis not, o'er thy beloved France it rests!  
"No, maiden! 'Tis where blood is daily shed,  
"By those who know not, of the christian's God.  
"The land of snows; where the savage Iroquois,  
"Loud yell, the war whoop, scattering death around.  
"Who! now comes from wild canadian forests?  
"De Maisonneuve, we know thy stately step.  
"What seekest thou? more men to lose their lives  
"In savage combat, with the deadly foe?  
"Or, dost thou come to rest thee, from thy toils?  
"Not so!—He seeks his woman's ministry

To labor for the little indian child,  
He seeks for woman's heart, and woman's hand;  
To carry out the work, by man begun  
Now is thy time, Troyes' daughter ! Come, behold !  
One from a city, bearing Mary's name.  
Ha ! dost thou know him ? why that stifled scream  
It is ! it is ! I've seen him in my dream,  
And wilt thou Margaret, leave all those so loved :  
Whom thou hast saved from dangers, worse than death,  
Have home, and country, lost all ties for thee,  
That thou wilt leave them for that icy clime ?  
To much we fear, the hour now hath come,  
When thou must bid adieu to fatherland.  
'Twas even so—and but a short time passed,  
When voice of Priest and Pastor, made her speed  
E'en to the city, where we now are met.  
But e'er she starts, Satan's dark plots are laid,  
And fear is cast, into that Virgin heart :  
Fear, oh not for life, but for that honor,  
Which woman values far, far more than life.  
Have courage maiden—He whom Mary sends,  
Is e'en as spotless in his life as thou !  
Dost thou forget, a beauteous angel stands,  
By night and day, forever at thy side  
Thou canst not see,—but in his hand he bears,  
A golden lily—type of thy pure soul.  
Fear not ! He watches, and he'll guard thee well.  
And now, in silent night, she humbly prays,  
When lo ! an answer to her prayer quick comes.  
She, who had won her by a smile, now stands,  
Before her chosen one,—and with a voice,  
Like Heaven's sweetest music, softly spoke.  
"Go, for I will never abandon thee !"  
Where now, the terrors of the trembling girl ?  
They've passed away—her own loved home is left.  
And soon she stands, upon Canadian shores.

"Oh ! think not, that her sacrifice was small  
"Can there be aught, that clings to us like home ?  
"The exile, from the sunny shores of France,  
"Or Erin's fields, of bright and matchless green,  
"Think you, he never yearns to see again  
"The home, wherein his boyhood's days were spent ?  
"That memory brings not often, back to him,  
"The haw thorn hedge, the primrose soft and sweet ?  
"Does he not hear, the little robin chirp,  
"And seek to find, the four leaved shamrock rare ?  
"How often, doth the perfume of a flower,  
"Bring a wild rush of scenes and faces gone,

" He hears again, a father's earnest voice ;  
" A mother's hand, is resting on his brow ;  
" And hark ! that peal of merry laughter loud,  
" That comes from childhood's pure and guileless heart,  
" Where are the friends of boyhood, staunch and true !  
" The sister, brother, of his early youth !  
" Ah, memory ! bitter are the silent tears,  
" Thou forest, e'en from eyes, that seldom weep.

" But turn we now, to where in forests dark,  
" A human angel, tends to every woe.  
" The wounded soldier, knows what blessed hand,  
" Has soothed his pain and lulled him into sleep ;  
" The Huron, loves the patient dark robed nun,  
" Who speaks to him of One, who died for all ;  
" The little indian children gather round,  
" And call her " Mother," in their native tongue ;  
" E'en the dark foe, the savage Iroquois,  
" Have brought to her, their little ones to cure.  
" No home has she, for four long weary years ;  
" Until at length, young kindred spirits came,  
" From far and near,—seeking to be enrolled,  
" In her blest cause. No house is there for them,  
" But later on, a little stable poor,  
" Is given unto Margaret, for her flock.  
" Did not the star shine brightly on that night,  
" Thou faithful watcher ! Now, thou hast thy wish.  
" In very truth, thou'rt likened unto her,  
" Who in an humble stable, gave to man,  
" The world's Redeemer,—Jesus, our King.  
" For five and forty years, spent in this land,  
" Thou did'st labor Mother, for the future good,  
" Of Canada's daughters fair. See ! the fruit  
" Of all thy weary days, thy restless nights !  
" The grain of mustard seed, has spread its roots,  
" And seventy holy houses, bear the name,  
" Of " La Congregation de Notre-Dame " !  
" Thou, their great foundress, Margaret Bourgeoys,  
" Whose death, was e'en another act of love !  
" What countless souls, oh ! Mother, hast thou saved.  
" Aye ! thousands thou hast called to serve their God.  
" Far from the world's seductive weary ways,  
" Reaping a precious harvest, all for Him,  
" Who shed His blood, on Golgotha, for them.  
" Thy eighty years of human life have passed,  
" But yet enshrined, in oak-leaf rich and rare,  
" Thy heart, loved Mother, still dwells with us.

Mother, from earth see thy children all hail thee,

As blessed in childhood, in youth and in age.  
Long, may thy virtues, shine brightly around us,  
Thy name, be engraved on fond memory's page,

CONGREGATION OF NOTRE-DAME.

January 12th, 1862.

The circumstances of Margaret Bourgeoys' life, as we have read them, and as they have been again recalled to us, are certain evidences, that she was chosen by divine predilection, to be, not only the model, the guide and the benefactress, of the youthful colony, over whose beginnings she presided, but still more, we love to think, that she was a gift from God, to the Church of Ville-Marie.

The spirit of religion that dwelt within her, was to be communicated in a special manner, to the future generations of Ville-Marie; and the stable, first Mother-House of the Congregation of Notre Dame was a school, wherein were taught, the precious precepts of the religious life. "With her," to use the words of 'Taulere,' "all could learn, away from the world " and its scandals, to serve the Lord in gladness, in peace and " in truth." She taught, "that the heart consecrated to Him, " should live for Him alone,—interiorly, by ardent love and " pure desires,—exteriorly, by the practice of good works, of " zeal, of piety and charity." Such were their lives, such the inculcations they received.

What others were unable to perform, Margaret Bourgeoys accomplished, because she alone had received grace at that time, for so high and so glorious a mission; the mission of colonizing in her way, the primitive population of Ville-Marie; the mission to form others to continue her praise worthy commencements. It was an arduous undertaking for the time, in which she lived, but she was not alone, God, His grace, and Mary's maternal protection were hers, and

"With Helpers, such as these, who would despond."

## ERRATA

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Page	6—spread	read sped.
"	15—incompreheesible	" incomprehensible.
"	28—those	" these.
"	42—Remembrance	" Remembrancer.
"	48—May	" may.
"	49—wigwams	" wigwam.
"	64—dreaviness	" dreariness.
"	77—Snpreinely	" supremely.
"	93—nevertheless	" nevertheless.
"	136—mocking	" mockery.
"	165—imitative	" imitatrix.
"	202—Bourgooys	" Bourgeoys.
"	248—renoun	" renown.
"	284—Didier	" Saint-Didier.
"	316—in	" on.
"	330—seraphins	" seraphim.
"	337—gay	" gray.
"	341—age	" aye.





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